Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 18 November 2020

By videoconferencing

Councillors:

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

Present:

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

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were tendered by District Councillor Davies who was attending an Executive Board meeting at Wychavon District Council. Apologies from the Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward, Lengthsman, Carl Brassington and Tree Warden, 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 Griffin regarding 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 16 September 2020, a copy of which has been circulated to all Councillors and the September Clerk's report, was agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman. The Clerk has circulated an amended copy of her report following a duplication of the May report.

Democratic Opening

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

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden:

i. Footpath 501 (opposite Orchard Hill/Maryworth Barn) – path through hedge cut by landowner.

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ii. Footpath 520 (by Nafford House) – strimmed.
iii. Footpath 521 (Asham Meadow) – kissing gate cleared.
iv. Footpath 522 (between weir and lock) – strimmed.

b) Tree Warden: A message was received from Rupert Keys saying that he has a brief report of items that need addressing as soon as possible upon a quick walk around on Sunday 14 November 2020. He will carry out a more detailed inspection over the next few weeks.

As follows:-

i. Based on on-going issues with visibility on the corner adjacent to The Manor rear entrance bend, I would like to suggest that the hedge planted outside the fence line a few years ago to be removed.

ii. The Willow trees along the boundary of Lower End Farm, down Berwick Lane to be removed as these are encroaching on to the road and potentially cause damage to the track and any associated drainage.

iii. The overhanging tree along the front of Birlingham House to be removed as soon as possible as this is only being held up by the ivy growing up it.

The Tree Warden has made suggestions for the improvement of Jubilee Wood and they have been noted in an email to Steve Morris, dated 19 November 2020 and copied to Ian Yates and June Hiden.

b) District Councillor:

i. Time of year when we are beginning our budget planning process which this year will be difficult.
ii. Observe the Covid guidance rules.
iii. Census – suggesting a reduction in District Councillors from 45 to 41/43? Whatever the result it will be a few years before implementation.
iv. Covid figures. WDC – rate per 100,000 / 153. Over 60 / 107.
MHDC – rate per 100,000 / 117. Over 60 / 97 people.
In Worcestershire ICU there are 8 beds occupied by Covid patients, which includes Worcester Royal and the Alexandra at Redditch. In total they have 28 beds.

c) County Councillor: Questions were raised with Councillor Adrian Hardman.

Boundary Commission – Wychavon District Council have not had a review for the long time. This happens periodically and if the Council do not review it then the Commission come in. Since the increase in housing development there is an uneven split. The Council are therefore considering reducing their Councillor numbers - but not by a lot because there has been significant growth.

Covid-19 – is increasing and the worst area is neighbouring Redditch and the spread in the over 60's is picking up. There has also been a reported care home incident at St Stephens in Worcester. The vaccination planning is an interesting challenge. 579,000 residents in the shortest time possible will need to be vaccinated, which is a mass programme. There will be possibly two centres, one in the south and the other in the north. Worcestershire County Council are the lead on public health.

Roads:–

Broadway Road

Aim to repair the foundations and then surface dress in the Spring. This will be weather dependant. The County Councillor was thanked for his efforts as he has driven this issue forward.

Church Lane

Solution regarding heavy traffic. Should the road be closed? The Village Design Statement resisted traffic calming. There were resident objections. If the alternative route was south of the church this could impact on the plane tree, the village green and the arch. One problem creates more. A complainant had contacted the Councillor but has now had communication about the issues. The trees around the cricket ground have been trimmed to assist matters.

Drainage:

Upper End

Was cleared but has blocked again. Worcestershire County Council endeavour to resolve the situation at the top of the newly installed drainage system. However, next year's budget is not available yet, especially with Covid. There is a capital provision for highways and flooding but there is a backlog of broken gullies.

A4104

A team were seen in the location of previous flooding at the top of Tiddlesley Wood and it appears the ditch and cross drains were cleared. This is an A road and an accident waiting to happen.

County Councillor Hardman was thanked for his time and updates. His full report is appended - See ***Appendix 1***

d) Clerk - See ***Appendix 2***

Information from the Lengthsman is included.

Discussion took place on the Census. Encouraging participation as groups are not accurate, elderly not filling in forms and the travelling community / migrant workers. The information will go in the Birlingham News to assist with publicising the need to complete.

5. Planning

a) Planning applications pending:-

i. 20/02013/LB - The Old Rectory New Barn Lane WR10 3AB

Remove and replace 2 windows in the family room and 3 dormer windows on the second floor

Mr David Niven

Parish Council comments:

"*The Parish Council support the application, provided the planning officer seeks the conservation officers views as to the materials, finish and design of the proposed units, to unsure the proposed window replacements do not adversely affect the listed building, or the conservation area.*"

ii. 20/02501/HP - Orchard Hill Upper End WR10 3AA

Erection of two storey side extension, replacement of porch, and single storey rear extension to replace conservatory

Mr and Mrs Rodrigues

b) Applications granted:-

i. 20/01442/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

Approved – 16 September 2020

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

Approved - 16 September 2020

c) Other applications:

i. 20/02286/CLPU - The Manor House Lower End WR10 3AD

Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use

Lawful Development Certificate for proposed temporary change of use of land for the siting of two shepherd huts.

ii. 20/02264/NMA - Hills Cottage Upper End WR10 3AA

Non-material Amendment following a grant of planning permission 20 /01442/FUL –

Addition of a single iroko door to the concealed side of the garage formed under carport

d) Enforcement – none.

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2020/2021

i. Bank balance (current) is £10,029.09 as at 20 October 2020. Business saving balance is £6,789.81 as at 9 October 2020.

ii. Receipts –

£3,324.00 – Wychavon District Council (Grant £89 and precept £3,235)
£135.00 – Worcestershire County Council
£255.00 – Worcestershire County Council

iii. Payments: –

i. £145.00 – Clerk's PAYE (July, August, September) (592)
ii. £580.00 – Clerk's salary (July, August, September) (593)
iii. £135.00 – Lengthsman July (590)
iv. £255.00 – Lengthsman August (591)

b) Payments for consideration –

i. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses (July, August, September) (594)

ii. £939.84 – SmartWater (£783.20 + £156.64 VAT) *(£500 grant received May 2020)(VAT to be claimed)* (595)
iii. £240.00 – Lengthsman September
iv. £135.00 – Lengthsman October
v. £145.00 – PAYE (October, November, December)

Councillor Griffin has commenced the VAT registration. Thanks, were given for his time in starting the process. The Gateway reference will be sent to the Clerk.

Poppy wreath approved at Item 10.

c) Budget setting 2021/2022

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.

Included in the discussion for consideration –

- Clerks pay, PAYE and expenses
- Car allowance – 40 pence per mile (Adoption of Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
- Insurance due in May
- Village Hall charges
- Training
- ICO
- Projects
- Poppy wreaths
- SmartWater
- Provisions:

  Plane tree
  Election
  Community

  Lengthsman (WCC). The budget for the next financial year has been set by the County Council and the scheme will continue. Reminder to Carl Brassington that any changes to his charges are to be submitted in the previous financial year.

Discussion took place on the Precept request. Councillor Griffin circulated a worksheet. The SmartWater initiative and Projects (the VE Day celebrations) were noted.

It was agreed by all Councillors that the precept would be set as per the worksheet at £6,785.00 including the grant of £179.00, as per the circulated draft prepared by Councillor Griffin. Clerk to action the Precept application which is to be submitted to Wychavon District Council.

7. SmartWater

Councillor Aston gave an update. The kits had been delivered directly to residents that have shown an interest. Covid restrictions may delay the normal launch for publicity. Councillor Aston will do an article for the Bystander and the Birlingham Newsletter telling villagers who requested them that they should have received them and that they will be registered to them individually. Any extra kits would cover most of the village. Signs have been requested for the village.

Councillor Aston was thanked for her work.

8. Millennium Bench

Councillor Cook gave an update. The original person interested in carrying out the works to the bench was no longer available. A friend of a resident 'Ian' has looked at the bench and given a verbal quote. A written quotation for £1,000.00 to repair and reassemble / self-supporting is considered reasonable considering the amount of work involved. The New Homes Bonus is for £872.00 so Councillors agreed that the balance will be taken from the Project Fund. The groundwork needs to be reconsidered and willing residents asked to assist the Councillors to prepare the area for the bench. It was agreed to take away any unwanted soil and level later.

Councillor Cook was thanked for her continued quest to get the bench back in situ.

9. Flooding and drainage

Discussion took place on flooding issues at the following locations.

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

Councillor Hardman aware but no further updates.

Hills Cottage area

This has been actioned. Councillor Aston monitoring.

The Old Coach House – manhole

Water flooding from manhole in the front 'garden' of the Old Coach House. This is a Severn Trent Water problem and they are monitoring. A larger drainage pipe is needed below the Cart House.

10. Remembrance

The poppy wreaths have been laid in accordance with Covid guidance and church advice given during lockdown. Councillor Luff had placed the Birlingham wreath on the memorial at 10am on 11 November. Councillor Cook had been to Eckington beforehand to put the other wreath on the war memorial there.

Birlingham rang a sole bell for 5 minutes. St James' was closed to the public but Revd Steve Dunton nevertheless read the names on the Roll of Honour in the church.

The poppy wreaths were agreed as per the budget at £55.00 and the Clerk to action a cheque for the British Legion.

11. Broadway Road

Councillor Luff has progressed the repairs to Broadway Road and emailed an update to all Councillors. County Councillor Hardman hoped that despite Covid and the weather that work could commence but gave no expectations.

12. Litter Pick

Councillor Aston reported. Villager Henry White and his friend from Eckington are undertaking 'Community Service' as part of their Silver Duke of Edinburgh award. They will be carrying out a village litter pick once a week for 6 months. Councillor Aston has seen proof of their 'duties'. The Clerk has also spoken with Mrs White and leant hi-viz jackets and litter pickers for the teenagers to use. Suggestions for litter picking were hedges, Swans Neck and public rights of way.

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13. Car by the Manor House

Councillor Byrne was asked about the red car parking on or near his field entrance on the Lower End bend. Several residents had said they were concerned about the location with passing traffic. Could it not be parked at the entrance to the paddock? Councillor Byrne explained under the planning consent for the stables, this was an access/egress splay area forming part of the drive into the stables, as such no parking is allowed there. However, if there were no complaints from residents nearby, or local authority planning enforcement, as there had been in the past, then he would not object to the red car parking there on a temporary basis and would suggest it to the car owner. He then mentioned that the first of the cars current parking position, namely off the line of the road, adjacent to the Manor bin store, was actually on his land also and he had given permission to the owner to park there, noting that cars using the road could see it when travelling in both directions. The second position on the verge was less convenient for road users, but was still legally parked, as there or no parking restrictions in that area.

The hedge on the bend was trimmed twice a year. The erection of the hedge was a stipulation of the planning permission for the stables to shield the stables from the road.

14. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

Other reports:-

SWDP Parish and Town Council Briefing

Councillor Luff had attended the meeting and reported back briefly to all Councillors.

Parish and Town Council Event

Councillor Yates had attended.

Dog Fouling

There had been another complaint regarding dog fouling. Councillor Byrne has a spare sign which the Clerk would action. Reminder to villagers that signs are there to empower people to challenge individuals who do not pick up after their dogs.

Speeding in Whitehall Lane

It was suggested that residents should take registration numbers if vehicles were speeding as this is a police matter. It was agreed by members that a polite letter should also be sent to the businesses / tenants in the Yard. The landowner would be approached first.

War Memorial

Chris Reynard has previously been asked to get new quotations for adding the missing soldier name to the war memorial. Clerk to chase.

15. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting - with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.07pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wednesday 20 November 2021 at 7.00pm which is proposed to be held by video conferencing.

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

Date: .....

Appendix 1 – County Councillor Hardman's report (18/11/20)

The number of cases in the county continues to rise at a fast rate; up by 30% in the last 7 days and as of today stands at 231 cases per 100,000. The England rate is 248 per 100,000.

There are currently 282 cases per 100,000 in Bromsgrove, up 35%. Wyre Forest has 280 cases per 100,000, up 7%, Redditch has 344, up 17%; Worcester has 263, up 25%; Wychavon 184, up 25%; but Malvern Hills has 114 cases per 100,000, down 6%.

In the last 7 days there have been 1386 confirmed cases of coronavirus recorded in Worcestershire.

We currently have good testing capacity in Worcestershire. sites have been identified for local test centres for all districts. The centres in Worcester and Redditch and Pershore centre are now open. Others are opening soon. These centres are designed to be accessible on foot, (i.e. not a drive-through) but they are not drop-in centres

There are 66 people in the county's hospitals with Covid-19 in Worcestershire. 8 people are in ITU, oddly slightly down on last week.

26 care homes in Worcestershire have current outbreaks (more than 2 cases, linked in either time place or person). 6 homes are currently closed to new admissions due to Covid.

Schools have reopened following half term last week. 86% of pupils in Worcestershire have been in school this week.

38 schools and settings in the county currently have pupils and/or staff isolating due to closed bubbles or partial bubble. This equates to 991 pupils currently isolating from a school population of more than 84,000.

Face coverings should by worn by staff and years 7 and above in corridors and in communal areas as per national guidance. Middle Schools are predominantly taking this approach with a small number extending to include the KS2 students where there are space constraints in the school.

There are 7 C19 current situations in Worcestershire short breaks units and children's homes.

Resource Centres for those with the most complex disabilities are now closed

***BUT the good news** is All libraries across Worcestershire remain open but with reduced services during the lockdown period.*

All Household Recycling Centres are remaining open, so the Councillors wife can have a trip out. But she can't get her son married as Registration offices in the county are closed to the public unless an appointment has been pre-booked or is essential.

Local Testing Centres is at Pershore Civic Centre Car Park: Operational (from last Wednesday)

Adult Services

Nationally, concerns remain about infection rates in care homes. The situation in Worcestershire is stable. We have 21 care homes across the county with more than 2 confirmed cases.

There are 6 supported living / extra care locations where either staff or service users have tested positive. We have started to regularly test all staff and residents at these locations.

We are increasing our capacity in care and nursing homes to support hospital pressures. We have initiated 3 new care home contracts

But the good news *is unlike Glos limited visits to care home residents can be arranged in line with the latest Government guidelines. Extra Care and Supported Living are also being advised that they can open to limited family visits. We have led the way on this regionally and attracted positive media interest for this. Screens and digital tablets are being used to enable families to keep in touch with residents virtually.*

The Adult Social Care Winter Plan guidance has been issued and we have constructed our local plan and will share with our partners and providers to ensure full compliance

Children's Services

Schools have reopened following the half term break in Worcestershire. 89% of pupils in Worcestershire have been in school this week. There are 38 schools and colleges in Worcestershire that currently have closed bubbles/part bubbles where staff or pupils have been identified as contacts and are self-isolating. This equates to 991 pupils currently isolating from a school population of more than 84,000. The delivery of PPE packs and face coverings to schools is continuing. The use of face coverings on home to school transport is mandatory in Worcestershire for pupils over the age of 11.

We are recommending that face coverings are worn at the school gates at drop off and pick-up times

We remain concerned to see an increase in demand in social care at the Family Front Door. Similar increases in calls and referrals have been seen elsewhere in the country.

The Council's Here2Help service is operational and providing support for the most vulnerable residents in our communities while we are in Lockdown. The H2H service is seeing a slight increase in the number of requests for help. H2H is in a good position to be able to 'flex up' when needed

Economy & Infrastructure

Highways maintenance works and our major construction projects will continue to operate safely during Lockdown.

It is too early to tell the impact of the Lockdown on traffic volumes but Bus travel in the county has increased since the beginning of the new school term.

All Household Recycling Centres are remaining open during Lockdown.

Finance

Financial spend due to the pandemic continues to be closely monitored. Four areas of financial support have been announced:

1. Support for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) – further funding of £32m nationally is being provided to councils to support the CEV. This works out at £14.60 per CEV and is for a 28-day period only. This is to be paid to upper tier councils in two tier areas.

2. Discretionary Support for Business – a sum of £20 per head has been allocated for discretionary business support. BEIS are due to write shortly (i.e. next 24 hours) with guidance but it will be down to councils to design and implement within this guidance. This is going to be paid to district councils in two tier areas.

3. Very High Alert Financial Support – given that all of the country has effectively been locked down and put into the highest tier of "very high" all areas are now to receive the £8 per head. For us this will be c£5m minus the £0.6m we have claimed to date from the Tier 1 position. But not clear what conditions will come with this.

4. Business Closure Grants – Grants of up to £3k are to be paid where there is a business closure. This will be paid to district councils in two tier areas for them to administer. The banding of support is as follows –

- *Properties with a rateable value of £15k or under = £1,334 per month*
- *Properties with a rateable value of between £15k to £51k = £2,000 per month*
- *Properties with a rateable value of £51k or over = £3,000 per month*

Local Issues.

I don't have a great list, but

1) *I think the County Council will, if the Gods wish, be doing some patching work in February 2021 in Lower End.*

2) *But I do wonder if the Parish Council had a view on closing the Eckington End of the lane at the back of the church. I have been wondering if to help the householders who live there, we could close one of the lane.*

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Appendix 2 – Clerk's Report

Lengthsman

Reporting:

Upper End

22 September - The highways team have been to the site and the roots blocking the gullies have been removed upstream of Hills Cottage. No other defects have been identified.

Tree Branch

Broken limb off a large cherry tree in the verge of Rectory Road.

The nearby homeowner was contacted and had reported it to the Highways. It was actioned shortly afterwards.

Broadway Road

14 October - Reference Number 936482 - pothole

New Barn Road

16 October - Reference Number 939183 and 939184- potholes

Lengthsman Scheme (New National Restrictions from 5 November)

3 November from Lengthsman Scheme Manager:

> *"Following recent news on the above I am now able to provide an update.*
>
> *Worcestershire County Council will be processing claims for all aspects of work completed within the Parish Lengthsman scheme during the lockdown.*
>
> *The local decision to carry out Parish Lengthsman works will be between the Parish and the Lengthsman, most probably with reference to your existing risk assessments.*
>
> *If you feel that works cannot be completed, please contact us on the phone number below to discuss."*

The Lengthsman has been advised and asked to follow the guidelines set out.

Drainage / Flooding

Upper End

Parsons Pleck

Thanks, have been received regarding the updates/situation from the residents at Court House, Parsons Pleck and Redstar.

21 September – Chairman received a call from the Regional Manager STW responding to an email that was sent to the CEO of STW over the weekend by the Clerk. He was very apologetic about the poor service. He said the road would be completed later that day and will be reopened as soon as the tarmac has dried. He would also communicate with the Clerk.

23 September – message received from Severn Trent, High Priority Complaints to Clerk.

> *"Thank you for getting in touch with our Chief Executive, Liv Garfield regarding the issues experienced in Birlingham.*
>
> *I understand our Business Lead, James Barton has been in contact with you regarding this. He's advised the reinstatement was completed on 21 September. We apologise for the frustration and disruption this matter has caused the village.*
>
> *James has identified and fed back the lessons learnt from this work and complaint to the business. Rest assure these have been addressed internally with the relevant departments.*
>
> *Once again, we apologise for the inconvenience caused by this. If you've any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details provided below."*



Old Coach House

30 September - Clerk to STW

"I believe STW technicians were in the village investigating yesterday. The crew said that this was a newly mapped asset. The Lengthsman spoke to the crew.

Old Coach House southwards - There are combined and surface water pipes running south that are known to have had root issues in the past (Highways cleared roots a few years ago when the pipes weren't shown on STW system).

The photos I sent through to Highways would suggest it was the combined that was surcharging.

This has been ongoing now for a couple of years."

Reply

"Our guys have identified the STW system needs a cleanse due to debris build up. Therefore, further work has been raised to clean the sewer. Once this has been completed, we will need to monitor the sewers performance. If it happens again, please in the first instance contact our call centre to log the flooding and also email myself, so further investigations can be carried out."

15 October 2020 – resident to Clerk

"Contractors visited yesterday to examine the drain outside home. After completing they advised that the pipe from the lower boundary of The Cart Shed down to the next drain is blocked with roots. They advised that the pipe will probably be cleared of the roots as a quick fix but that as the pipe is so badly worn this will only be temporary. It needs a new pipe. My guess is that they will take the quick - fix route which will be false economy. If PC can exert pressure perhaps, we could get the problem solved properly."

Birlingham House

9 November - Reference Number 936482 - Broken pipes in verge - there appears to be a chamber. This fault report has attached photos. *"There have been issues with STW further up the road. I want this issue to be investigated at this location to ascertain if it is a WCC problem or STW. There is also a telegraph pole in the same vicinity*."

10 November – Reference number 947657 asking for further details regarding what issues this matter may be causing so that we can consider if this requires further investigation.

12 November - PEM 620674 – contact asking for information.

Clerk sent clarification and action awaited from WCC.

NHS Covid-19 contact tracing app

22 September

Message from Ian Dipple, Marketing and Communications Manager, Malvern Hills District and Wychavon District Councils

"Are you ready for the new NHS Covid-19 app?

From Thursday (24 September 2020) the NHS Covid-19 contact tracing app will be launched. This is part of the test and trace service and will be important in helping control the spread of coronavirus and protecting each other.

All businesses in the following sectors must by law display a QR code poster from 24 September:

* *Hospitality*
* *Leisure and tourism*
* *Close contact services*
* *Places of worship*
* *Local authority venues*

Community centres, youth and community centres and village halls are all covered by this change to the law. Getting a QR code for your venue is quick and easy from the Government's website."

Clerk notified The Swan, BVH and the St James' who were not aware of this change to the law.

Activity by Nafford Lock

A Councillor reported that there was activity at Nafford. Clerk contacted the landowner who confirmed that they have been clearing a small area to camp. This will cease now and they will let the area grow back as they were not aware of the vandalism that has been happening in the area.

Local Grit Bins

19 August – message from Business Support Officer, Worcestershire Highways to check bins.

Lengthsman is aware of the village situation.

BVH bookings

22 September – Bookings Secretary to Clerk

"Just to confirm that I can cancel all the present bookings (up to Mar 2021). At present there are no bookings made after Mar 2021. This includes the19 May 2021."

Clerk to BVH - has asked that Wednesday 19 May 2021 is a confirmed booking due to the Annual Parish meeting.

SmartWater – Grant Application

22 September 2020 - OPCC Grants at West Mercia Police message to Vice-Chairwoman

"Dear Paula,
Please find attached the formal offer letter and terms and conditions along with the acceptance form which will need to be signed and returned by 7th October.

You will then be contacted by someone from the SmartWater team who will advise you how to go about ordering the kits."

Ellie Giles, Policy & Commissioning Intern, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Councillor Paula Aston confirms that Birlingham Parish Council has been approved for the 25% grant.

New Homes Bonus scheme closure

24 September - from Communities and Engagement Officer, Strategy and Performance Team

"I am emailing to inform you about the arrangements for closing our New Homes Bonus (NHB) funding scheme and the use of any remaining funds.

If your parish/town council has already spent all of its NHB allocation you may disregard this email. If not please share it with all members of your parish/town council and consider what action you need to take.

The NHB scheme has been in operation for around eight years. We published the final NHB allocations for parish and town councils several years ago. In January 2019, we wrote to all parish and town councils with uncommitted NHB enquiring about their intentions and we have been in touch with many of you again since then.

Following a review of unspent NHB monies by our Communities and Funding Advisory Panel, our Executive Board has agreed arrangements for closing the scheme to new applications at the end of March 2021. The Board has also agreed timescales for commencing already approved projects that are not yet under way. The full details of the arrangements for closing the NHB are set out below.

1. *Project delivery on New Homes Bonus (NHB) approved projects should be commenced within the timescales set out below:*

Projects approved	***Deadline for commencing project delivery***
Before 1 January 2019	*31 March 2021*
Between 1 January 2019 and 30 September 2020	*30 September 2021*
Between 1 October 2020 and 31 March 2021	*31 March 2022*

2. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, if project delivery has not commenced by the required date, the NHB funding will be uncommitted and no longer available to parish and town councils under the NHB scheme.

3. Parish and town councils with NHB balances of £200 or less can make proposals to spend the remaining funds by a simple application and that would be determined by the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Chairman of the Communities and Funding Advisory Panel. Please get in touch with me if this applies to you.

4. The NHB scheme will be closed to new applications after 31 March 2021.

5. Any NHB monies still uncommitted after 31 March 2021 and any approved funds not subsequently spent within the agreed timescales will be transferred to the Community Legacy Grant scheme. This may allow for a fourth round of the scheme to take place during 2021/22."

Booklet - The Jubilee have responded saying "the current plan is to get the booklet printed by VE Day 2021."

Memorial inscription – Chris Reynard will get 3 revised quotations.

SWDP Parish and Town Council Briefing

The purpose of the briefing was to update on the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review and the Government's proposed reforms to the planning system in England.

Julia reports: (to be confirmed)

I attended by Zoom a meeting which was the SWDP Review for Parish and Town Councils. Andy Ford, Senior Planning Officer read out the slides and then was there was much discussion about various consultations, reviews and timetables for future planning frameworks. It is all quite confusing, but the presentation which Ian points us all towards by Holly Jones very neatly sums up everything my meeting was about. Various parish councils raised their concerns about the long-term influence of their parish plans, to which the reply was the plans will still be relevant but probably have little influence but they will be reviewed in 2023 with the SWDP.

Parish and Town Council event – 8 October

Chairman attended the Parish and Council event. Report as follows: (to be confirmed)

"The most interesting presentation was by Holly Jones on Planning. I was hoping that the Housing Update by Stephen Gabriel would also be interesting but it was just a lengthy description of rough sleepers!"

Councillors were sent Wychavon's survey and response to the government's proposal to raise the affordable housing threshold for small sites to 40.

South Worcestershire Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations DPD further call for sites

From Policy at Wychavon District Council

> *"The South Worcestershire Councils (Malvern Hills, Worcester and Wychavon) are preparing a Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) that will identify land to meet the requirement to accommodate Travellers and Travelling Showpeople across south Worcestershire.*
>
> *As part of this process, the South Worcestershire Councils are undertaking a further "Call for Sites" exercise which provides an opportunity for individuals, agents, landowners and developers to suggest sites that they consider might be suitable to allocate in the DPD. Proposals could be for either new sites or an expansion or intensification of an existing site. Proposals are invited for permanent residential sites or transit sites / temporary stopping places.*
>
> *Please note, there is no need to submit any sites that you previously submitted to either of the previous two "call for sites" or where you have written to ask for a site to be considered through the Site Allocations DPD process unless you wish to make any changes to previously submitted sites (for example site area, land ownership, new access), or wish to withdraw any site(s) from further consideration.*
>
> *All sites submitted will undergo a rigorous assessment against specific planning criteria to assess their potential suitability, including whether safe vehicular access can be provided, their proximity to towns and villages with services and facilities and any impact of developing the site on both site residents and the settled community. Furthermore, it is not appropriate for Traveller sites to be allocated in the Green Belt, in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or on sites liable to flooding. Submitting a site for consideration does not guarantee that it will be found suitable or that it will be allocated as part of the emerging DPD. Any sites that are included within an adopted DPD would still require planning permission.*
>
> *If you wish to submit a potential site for the council's consideration, please complete a Site Submission Form. The deadline for suggesting potential sites as part of this 'Call for Sites' is 5pm on Thursday 19 November 2020.*
>
> *Please send your completed submission form(s) and location map(s) to:*
>
> *email: contact@swdevelopmentplan.org<mailto:contact@swdevelopmentplan.org>; or*
>
> *post: South Worcestershire Development Plan, Wychavon Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, WR10 1PT"*

Public Rights of Way

Clerk in discussion with Redstar

Footpath 501 - Upper End - Maryworth Barn/ Orchard Hill

21 October 2020 – resident complaint of a blocked footpath from Diary Cottage on the Eckington Road to Upper End.

23 October – actioned and gap cut in the hedge where the footpath is defined.

Footpath 510 – The Avenue to Withy Way

"I passed a message a few months ago about the Public Right of Way that crosses from near Birlingham house (opposite the track to the sewage works) to the Footpath in Withy Walk (near Whitehall Farm). It needs to be 'marked' through the crop field to identify where it goes. A few residents have mentioned that the path is not defined and should be and it was suggested that it could wait until the summer crop was harvested.

Would you have a look into this matter now so that it is actioned before the Parish Council meeting next month?

Many thanks for your assistance."

Reply

"I did receive the message and will see what can be done. It's very wet currently but we will mark it somehow."

South Worcestershire Development Plan – Update to the SWDP Review Timetable, New SWDP Website and Neighbourhood Planning

26 October

Update to the SWDP Review Timetable

Further to the adoption of the Local Development Scheme 2020-23 by each of the three South Worcestershire Councils at the end of September, the SWDP Review timetable has been formally updated. The update to the timetable to push back the Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) and subsequent stages of the process to later than originally planned is in response to issues with evidence collation arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The new SWDP Review timetable is as follows:

Additional Focused Consultation (Regulation 18) - March-April 2021
Publication Consultation (Regulation 19) - November-December 2021
Submission (Regulation 22) - March 2022
Independent Examination (Regulation 24) - May 2022-January 2023
Receipt of Inspector's Report (Regulation 25) - March 2023
Adoption (Regulation 26) - April 2023

The Local Development Scheme 2020-23 can be accessed on the SWDP website using the following link - https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/south-worcestershire-development-plan/publications/local-development-scheme.

New SWDP Website

There is a new SWDP website which has now gone live, replacing the existing SWDP website which was hosted externally on WordPress. The new SWDP website can be accessed using the following link - https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/south-worcestershire-development-plan, with all links to the previous website (www.swdevelopmentplan.org http://www.swdevelopmentplan.org) now automatically redirecting to the new website.

We hope you find the new SWDP website more user friendly and easier to navigate, but if there are any issues please do not hesitate to contact a member of the SWDP team.

Neighbourhood Planning

As part of the South Worcestershire Councils active support of Neighbourhood Planning, and in recognition of the difficulties of publicising Neighbourhood Planning work locally due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the South Worcestershire Councils are committed to promoting local Neighbourhood Planning work which needs input from local residents and local organisations. As such, please see below current Neighbourhood Planning work which is being undertaken which may be of interest to you if you are a local resident or local organisation:

Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan

All Droitwich residents are urged to complete a survey to help create a Neighbourhood Plan for Droitwich Spa. The purpose of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan project is to contribute to the future well-being of the town and its people and businesses by providing a reference point for local planning decisions protected through force of law where appropriate. The objectives are to create a vision for all aspects of future development in Droitwich Spa, reflecting the views of the community, and could include policies on:

* How land within the Town Boundaries should be used.

* Where new homes and possibly, offices and industrial units, should be built.

* What they should look like.

* The protection of the environment, our green spaces and development of recreational areas.

* Protection of sporting facilities and addressing the fact that many fall below national standards

* Addressing housing needs - in particular, the need for smaller dwellings and social housing that developers are not keen to progress.

* How the necessary infrastructure as a consequence is handled.

You can access the survey at www.dsnpwg.org<https://dsnpwg.org/>. The survey can be completed online using a computer, tablet, or smartphone; or downloaded and printed for completion. It is vital that we have the views of people from all parts of the town and all ages.

If you have any queries on any of these matters of any other SWDP related queries, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the SWDP team on 01386 565 000 or email contact@swdevelopmentplan.org<mailto:contact@swdevelopmentplan.org>.

Covid-19 Latest Advice

13 November - Deborah Dale, Member Engagement Officer, Legal & Governance, Worcestershire County Council

To all Parish and Town Councils,

> *"As you will be aware, the number of Covid-19 cases in Worcestershire continues to rise and there is particular concern about the number of vulnerable people and people over the age of 60 who are contracting the virus.*
>
> *Attached is the latest advice, which hopefully you can share in newsletters etc. along with a poster which we invite you to print off and display."*

We know that people over 60 can be badly affected by the virus. It can make you very poorly, need hospital care and even cause death. This is, of course, very worrying. It also has implications for our NHS. It leads to pressure on our services and creates a rising demand for intensive care beds. We need to act now, to prevent this situation becoming any worse. How can you help? How can you protect yourself and others? Please follow national restrictions during the lockdown period and then any new guidance from 2nd December. You should also keep your distance, wash your hands regularly and wear face coverings where needed. These measures are our best defence against the virus. We know it can be hard, keeping a distance from others, avoiding travelling to places, not meeting up with friends or family. But the virus spreads when we mix and have contact and don't stay apart. Stay local, don't visit areas with higher levels of restrictions. If we can stay local, stop visiting areas with greater numbers of infections, we can protect ourselves and others. Please ensure you self-isolate as soon as you have a symptom of Covid-19. The symptoms to look out for are; a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature) a new, continuous cough– this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual) a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste– this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal. If you have any of these, no matter how mild your symptoms, please self-isolate immediately and book a test. You can do this online https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119. With a second national lockdown in place, the County Council's Here2Help service is on hand to help residents who require extra support. A phone number has been set up to help fill out the form for those who can't access the internet. The dedicated number is: 01905 768053 and is open Monday - Thursday 9:00 - 5:00pm and Friday 9:00 - 4:30pm. Guidance for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable has been updated to include additional measures to keep this group safe during lockdown. This information is available on the#Here2Help shielding advice page on the county council's website. The Government is encouraging people in this group to register for support on the national website where they, for example, can get access to priority supermarket deliveries. For more information, please visit: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help

Poster states:

HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Latest advice on how to self-isolate:

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been told to self-isolate, you should:

Go home and stay at home
Do not leave your home unless for medical reasons
Stay away from those you live with
Do not go out for walks or exercise
Do not meet friends
Do not go to work or school
Isolate for 10 days if you are COVID-19 positive
Isolate for 14 days if you are told you are a contact
Contact our Here 2 Help service if you have no support: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help
You should not go outside at all. This is different advice to during a lockdown.
Self-isolating means you must not leave your home, not even for a daily walk.

Make sure you have plenty of healthy food and drinks, books, magazines and other activities to keep you busy.
Let friends, family and contacts know to stay away.
Please stay at home and stop the virus spreading
Get all the latest updates at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/coronavirus

Put on noticeboard

..... Birlingham News .....

Extracts of interest

Birlingham **News 230 – 23 September**

As we head into autumn, here is the latest round-up of village news, after an unexpectedly busy week.

In this issue:

1. Helen Porter
2. Church News
3. Churchyard News
4. Theft of Catalytic Converter
5. Parish Council Report
6. Parish Council Report – Roads, Flooding and Traffic
7. Road Closure at Upper End
8. Planning Applications

5. Parish Council Report

Ian Yates writes:

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting by videoconference at 7.00pm on Wednesday 16th September. Attendees at the meeting discussed the following:

Roads, flooding and traffic. See separate item below.

Footpaths. Bruce Hayward, Footpath Warden reported that he had strimmed FP511 (Withy Walk) and that two fallen trees had been cleared by a resident. Also, the kissing gate on FP519 (The Row) had been repaired.

SmartWater. As previously reported, the Parish Council has decided to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it is free to all Birlingham residents. Councillor Paula Aston has been registering those interested and is pleased to report that 64 out of 146 Birlingham properties have 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. If you haven't yet signed up, please contact Paula on paula_mann@hotmail.com.

Millennium Bench. 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.

Planning. The following planning applications have been approved:

- The Swan Inn – External seating area (retrospective)
- Hills Cottage – Garage/carport
- Stable Cottage – Two-storey extension

Tree Warden. After six years as tree warden, Karl Grimston has reluctantly had to resign due to pressure of work. I'm sure that all residents would like to thank him for his efforts in maintaining the trees and hedges around the village. Rupert Keys has very kindly volunteered to take over from Karl and they will be meeting to ensure a smooth handover of activities.

Litter Pick. Due to COVID restrictions the normal annual litter pick will not take place this year. Instead, we are encouraging residents to participate in the national 'Great British September Clean'. There are two ways to participate:

- As an individual you can 'pledge to pick' – see https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean/pledge-to-pick.

- As a group (maximum 6) sign up to host a registered clean up at https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/user/register.

Any resident who would like to borrow a litter-picking stick can do so by contacting the Parish Clerk, June Hiden, at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk.

Remembrance Day. Remembrance Sunday will be on 8th November this year and the Parish Council will, as usual, be supporting the event (subject to COVID restrictions) in Birlingham and Eckington. Councillor Maxine Cook will attend in Eckington and Councillor Julia Luff in Birlingham.

Volunteer Group. With the number of COVID cases on the rise again, the Parish Council would like to remind everyone that the Volunteer Group is still active and details of how to contact it are still on the Birlingham VillageForum: http://www.birlingham.org/forum/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=1&t

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

6. Parish Council Report – Roads, Flooding and Traffic

Ian Yates writes:

At its meeting on Wednesday 16th September Birlingham Parish Council discussed several highways problems.

Birlingham roads and flooding issues. The Parish Council discussed a number of concerns:

- Broadway Road at Lower End is now in a poor state of repair. Councillor Adrian Hardman of Worcestershire County Council, who attended the meeting, 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." Councillor Julia Luff will progress-chase this.

- 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 and in recent months during heavy rain. Reported and jetting teams will investigate blocked pipes.

- Hills Cottage, Upper End: flooding due to blocked/broken drains. Councillor Hardman will visit on 18th September to understand the problem.

- Water flooding from manhole in front garden of the Old Coach House. This is an STW (Severn Trent Water) problem and they have been informed and will action.

- Parsons Pleck, Upper End: water leak and road closure. Initially attended by STW 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 are arguing over who is responsible for reinstating the road! Parish Clerk, June Hiden, is escalating to try and get a fast resolution. (See also update below.)

- Water leak at the top of Berwick Lane. Pipes have been jetted and it appears to have stopped the leak.

Traffic movements

- Whitehall Lane. The Parish Council was contacted by a resident of Whitehall Lane concerned about an increase in traffic. After some investigation 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. We are 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. 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 'no HGV' sign on the junction of Eckington Road and New Barn Road is only advisory. 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.

7. Road Closure at Upper End

The Parish Clerk writes:

As you will be aware, Upper End was closed for repairs to a water main last weekend. The issue was initially attended by Severn Trent Water (STW), who concluded that it was a rainwater drainage problem that was pushing up the road surface. Highways at Worcestershire County Council attended but found it was a mains water leak. STW then sent a team to fix the water leak on Friday 18th September but argued over who was responsible for reinstating the road.

James Barton, STW Regional Manager, responded to an email from the Parish Council on Monday 21st. He was very apologetic about the poor service and said lessons of communication would be addressed. He said the road would be completed later that day. By 12 noon the repair was complete but barriers and the road closure were still in place to allow the tarmac to cool and dry. STW advised that the road should remain closed for 24 hours, especially as the tarmac was still hot.

However, at 2.30pm the County Council Highways Department overruled this and instructed that the road was to be reopened immediately. The Parish Council has photographs of the road before reopening, in case there is damage to the surface caused by vehicles crossing it before it was ready. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.

8. Planning Applications

The following planning applications have been determined by Wychavon District 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). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.
- Swan Inn, Church Street. Construction of single storey partially open-sided external seating area (retrospective) (Case No. 20/01451). **Approved**.

Birlingham **News 231 – 30 September**

The Harvest Praise service takes place a week on Sunday.

In this issue:

1. Harvest Praise, Sunday 11th October
2. Rock 'n' Roll Night – Postponed
3. Rural Beat Newsletter
4. BVH 100 Club Winners

3. Rural Beat Newsletter

West Mercia Police's Rural and Business Team have published the second edition of their quarterly 'Rural Beat' newsletter. The issue includes items on coronavirus, the theft of pheasants, SmartWater, the theft of catalytic converters, home security and much more.

Some of these issues are particularly relevant to Birlingham at the moment. A large number of pheasants have been taken from the village recently and one of our residents had their catalytic converter stolen. In addition, there has been a spate of fly tipping at Nafford and New Barn Lane and vandalism at Nafford. We would urge everyone to be particularly vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour by phoning 101.

If you haven't signed up for SmartWater yet, please do so (contact Paula Aston on paula_mann@hotmail.com). The more people use SmartWater, the greater will be the deterrent.

The police newsletter can be downloaded at www.birlingham.org/docs/ruralbeat_autumn_2020

Birlingham **News 232 – 14 October**

Our apologies but we are going to mention Christmas in this edition: your opportunity to contribute to the next Bystander.

In this issue:

1. Road Closure – Church Street
2. Next Edition of the Bystander
3. Bystander Archives on the Village Website
4. Planning Applications

Road Closure – Church Street

Part of the east end of Church Street will be closed for five days from Monday 2nd November. The closure is for 110 metres, starting just after the Swan Inn in the direction of Shorthill. This is to allow for mains connection to one of the properties.

Planning Applications

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

The Old Rectory, New Barn Road: Remove and replace 2 windows in the family room and 3 dormer windows on the second floor (Case No. 20/02013). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 29th October.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

Birlingham **News 233 – 28 October**

This week we have a round-up of news relating to the Church and Remembrance Day.

In this issue:

1. Annual Parochial Church Meeting, Monday 2nd November
2. Remembrance Service, Wednesday 11th November
3. Church News

Birlingham **News 234 – 11 November**

Last call for articles and photos for the next edition of the Bystander!

In this issue:

1. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 18th November
2. Church News
3. Next Edition of the Bystander
4. Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter
5. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 18th November

The next meeting of Birlingham Parish Council takes place on Wednesday 18th November 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.

Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

The latest newsletter from Neighbourhood Watch is now available. Among other news, there is advice on three steps to stay ahead of cybercrime.

The newsletter can be viewed at www.birlingham.org/docs/neighbourhood_watch_2020_11.pdf.