# Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 20 January 2021

By videoconferencing

**Councillors:**

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

**Present:**

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

**Welcome** – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were tendered by Councillor Cook who had no internet due to a broken cable and Covid-19 restrictions preventing an alternative property. Apologies from the Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward and Lengthsman, Carl Brassington.

## 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.

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 18 November 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. I note that Revills have marked the path across the field opposite Field House (and moved the finger post slightly) as per request.

b) Tree Warden: None

c) District Councillor:

i. Covid-19 figures sent today ***Appendix 1*** show rates are beginning to fall and the vaccine programme kicking in. The Public Health Executive has stated that lockdown is now having the effect of holding infection rates which still isn't good news for the NHS. The other notable statement made was that without lockdown, the new strain would have ripped through the region.
ii. Budget figures will go to the Board on 3 February 2021 recommending that the tax percentage increase remains the same as previous financial year. Reserves are decreasing because of non-payments on business and council tax.
iii. 6-month review has no interest from investments.

Councillor Davis' attendance was appreciated and he was told it was good to see him.

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

i. Councillor Hardman said that Covid-19 was running everything and things were a long way from the edge of the woods. The hospital was full, with an average of 54 in ICU. The vaccination programme is going well and nearly all over 80's and care staff have been done.
ii. The Council tax increase will be 2.5%
iii. £1.5m has been spent on drainage, to deal with a backlog of broken gullies over 35 years. We are seeing more intensive rain.
iv. A4104 is a shambles. The ditch needs clearing and the drainage pipe exposed. He will progress as this is an A road.
v. Two road closures are planned, Broadway Road and New Barn Road. There is a telecommunication application on Broadway Road so Councillor Hardman will try to address the concerns over the priorities of digging the highway, firstly with telecoms and then the resurfacing.
vi. Aware of Whitehall Lane pothole. Clerk to contact a resident regarding the issue.
vii. Hills Cottage flooding. The jetters came out but cleared the wrong drains.

County Councillor Hardman was thanked for his time and updates which were appreciated. His full report is appended - See ***Appendix 2***

c) Clerk - See ***Appendix 3***

Information from the Lengthsman is included.

## 5. Planning

a) Planning applications pending:- none

b) Applications granted:-

i. 20/2013/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

Approved - 10 December 2020

Parish Council comments:

*"The Parish Council support the application, provided the planning officer seeks the conservation officer's 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

Approved - 6 January 2021

*Parish Council comments:*

*"The Parish council finds itself split evenly between supporting the application and opposing it. Therefore, we set out below the fundamental issues raised in both camps, for the consideration of the planning officer appointed to this application.*

*In balanced support of the application:*
*The proposal does not adversely affect neighbouring properties and although the extension does not directly match the existing, I do not find it inappropriate.*
*The extension doesn't overlook neighbours and the upstairs room and balcony at the front looks towards the road and fields opposite. The footprint of the house has not been substantially increased. Off street parking is unaffected by the change. However, the extension on the right is a little out of keeping and overpowering with the symmetry of the original house, although the current flat roofed extension which it replaces is not in itself particularly attractive.*

*Comments opposing the application:*
*strong reservations were expressed about the overdevelopment of small cottages within the village, in particularly this originally small cottage, and the possible precedent that this sets for future applications.*
*The extension does seem to look 'odd' in so much as the aesthetics of the building and the proportions in relation to the original cottage look rather unbalanced. The modern style of the proposed first floor addition is also not in keeping with the character of the property or indeed the village. Whilst appreciating that the current flat roof is also not quite a redeeming feature.*

*Summary:*

*In essence we ask the planning officer to consider in considering this application, whether this is an over development of the plot. If the current single store extension, which may in itself have been too substantial an extension to so small cottage should be added too, contributing to the original cottage scale being difficult to recognise. Please also consider the appropriateness of the modern materials and components appropriateness."*

c) Enforcement – none.

d) Conversation with Planning Officer - suggestion informal discussions.

Three members of the Parish Council attended an informative Training Session on Planning organised by Wychavon District Council, which will help guide comments on future planning applications. All Councillors have been sent a link to the presentation slides, including enforcement which were helpful. It was suggested that the Parish Council could make an early connection with a planning officer in an informal way if there is something parishioners feel strongly about. A list of items that constitute material considerations has been circulated by Councillor Byrne.

e) Neighbourhood Plan – converting from VDS

Following on from the training course the question was raised in the value or usefulness in putting together a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council carried out a Village Survey in 2015 and following this it was decided to develop a Village Design Statement (VDS). This was published in July 2017 following an extensive consultation with residents. The Birlingham VDS was adopted by Wychavon District Council in February 2018. The Parish Council has decided that approximately every three years it will consider whether there is value in taking the VDS work forward to a full Neighbourhood Plan. This was discussed at length taking into account the work, time and cost involved and the benefits to the village. There would be a need for professional input and a verification before going to the local authority. It would mean full commitment from the village, the process is drawn out, needing environmental studies, six weeks to publicise, an open session and a referendum. Eckington had carried out such a project and it had taken a couple of years with the assistance of a chartered surveyor and still at considerable costs.

The conclusion was that the VDS provides sufficient guidance at present but that this decision should be reviewed again in three to four years.

## 6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2020/2021

i. Bank balance (current) is £9,479.97 as at 2 December 2020. Business saving balance is £6,789.93 as at 9 December 2020.

ii. Receipts –

£240.00 – Worcestershire County Council (Lengthsman)

iii. Payments: –

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 (596)
iv. £135.00 – Lengthsman October (597)
v. £145.00 – PAYE (October, November, December) (598)
vi. £55.00 – Royal British Legion (599)

Cheque numbers 600 and 601 were cancelled.

b) Payments for consideration –

i. £255.00– Lengthsman November
ii. £210.00 – Lengthsman December
iii. £500.00 – Bench refurbishment deposit
iv. BVH charges for Ordinary meeting dates (7pm to 9pm) (Annual Parish tba)
v. £40.00 estimate – ICO
vi. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses (October, November, December)
vii. £580.00 – Clerk's pay (October, November, December)

c) Precept / Tax Base
The budget application has been returned to Wychavon District Council and has acknowledged as a £6,785.00 requirement.

The calculations on the tax base have been received from Wychavon District Council.

d) VAT registration was completed but no timescale on the original application. This has not been updated. Councillor Griffin will chase as there has been no email or phone call to the Clerk.

## 7. Dates of Proposed Meetings - 2021

Dates

The Wednesday dates for this year were requested by Birlingham Village Hall and have been agreed for the hall and confirmed by BVH Secretary:-

19 May (includes the provisional booking for the Annual Parish Meeting)
21 July
15 September
17 November

Format

Format for future Parish Council meetings – Zoom v BVH. Is it likely that face to face meetings will be able to start again? At this stage there is no answer until further government guidelines.

Annual Parish Meeting (not a Council Meeting)

What do we do about the Parish Meeting which is normally held in May? The Annual Parish meeting gives an opportunity for the Parish Council to review and summarise their activities with residents over the previous twelve months and to get feedback on plans for the future.

At previous meetings, village clubs, societies, West Mercia Police and authorities have also had an opportunity to present their activities or progress. It was also a suggestion that these styles of meetings could be done bi-annually. Due to Covid-19 the Parish Meeting was cancelled in 2020 following government guidelines. Councillor Porter has agreed to speak to village clubs and societies to gauge interest and to put a plan together whilst still considering social distancing. The Birlingham Cricket Club was suggested as a venue. The idea of a social engagement around the village may be welcomed in May. It is hoped that the meeting can be held this year on Friday 21 May, if not in person, then virtually. If this meeting is by Zoom, then a face to face one would be planned for 2022.

## 8. Millennium Bench

Councillor Cook said that the bench repairs will be started once the deposit has been received. It was agreed to pay £500 to start the restoration works as soon as possible.

Councillor Yates will contact Rupert Keys regarding ground preparations, as previously suggested. Clarian who are restoring the bench will position it back on the village green once the ground has been levelled and materials laid. Birlingham News message will ask if any residents have a mini digger that could be used.

## 9. SmartWater

As previously reported, the Parish Council decided to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it was free to all Birlingham residents. There are ten SmartWater kits still available. As soon as nine remaining ones have been registered the project can progress to the next stage.

## 10. Flooding

There are many road and flooding issues in the village but good progress is being made. The Parish Council discussed the following, all of which had been escalated to the authorities responsible:

A4104

Multiple incidents of flooding on the A4104 at the top of Tiddesley Bank on the bend near Lower Farm have caused significant disruption and danger to traffic during heavy rain. The jetting teams have been out to unblock eyelets and establish drains which it is hoped will alleviate the problem.

Hills Cottage, Upper End

Blocked drains have been cleared but further work is required due to soil runoff from fields.

Old Coach House

Water continues to flood from manhole in front garden of the Old Coach House during heavy rainfall. Severn Trent Water has attended and a new pipe is required as the old one is blocked by tree roots.

Manor House Paddock and The Moors

The drain in the highway near the Moors boundary, some Severn Trent Water property in the grounds of the Moors and the Paddock of the Manor House have been jetted. The inspection chamber in the road by the Manor House was cleared of stones and debris. Severn Trent Water has excavated a blocked culvert in the paddock. Investigative work is on-going, but the action has stopped the flow running across the road, which could have been a hazard in icy conditions.

Clerk continues to chase for updates.

## 11. Roads

Berwick Lane

The Environment Agency is carrying out maintenance work on the weir near Nafford Lock as some of the gabions have collapsed and need replacing. To access this with heavy plant and machinery they have re-stoned the surface of the 'fisherman's car park' at the end of Berwick Lane, as well as the track from the car park to the weir. They will also be trimming the withy trees near the bridge over Berwick Brook. The owner and the Environment Agency are in negotiation with the authorities for a new gate to be placed at the end of Berwick Lane, which will allow pedestrian access but control vehicular access to the car park. This will hopefully reduce cases of anti-social behaviour similar to those seen last summer.

Whitehall Lane

Traffic movements: The Parish Council was contacted in September by two residents of Whitehall Lane concerned about an increase in the volume of traffic and speed. The Parish Council contacted the owner of Hall Farm who has since written to, and met with, the tenants/licensees to make them aware of concerns. All are very supportive of the need to minimise inconvenience and disruption.

Pothole: A resident has reported a pothole that needs filling. The Parish Council has raised a request for this to be addressed.

New Barn Lane

The road will be closed from 1 February 2021 for repairs. This is from the junction with Eckington Road to the Avenue and a notice will be published.

Broadway Road/Lower End

Broadway Road at Lower End is now in a poor state of repair. The road will be closed from 1 February 2021 for repairs. This will be from the junction with Broadway and Grange Road all the way round Broadway Road to the junction between Shorthill and Church Street. A message has been placed in the Birlingham News and residents have been informed.

## 12. Attendance at WDC Planning Training

A Planning training course was attended by Councillors Yates, Byrne and Luff on 11 January 2021.

## 13. Covid-19 Volunteers

The volunteers on the WhatsApp Group are still up and running. It was agreed to update this in Birlingham News and the Forum expressing that the Group would only carry out essential shopping.

## 14. Bulb Teas / Visitors to churchyard

The Friends of St James' have cancelled the bulb teas due to the pandemic and advice from the Diocese. The church needs funds as there is currently no revenue. Notices will be placed on the churchyard gates asking any 'visitors' for Covid-19 restrictions to be respected.

## 15. Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premise FTTP)

Councillor Yates received an email from a resident enquiring about the Government's Gigabit Voucher Scheme that can be used to fund the provision of Full Fibre Broadband to homes as part of a community project. Full Fibre Broadband (also known as FTTP) replaces the copper telephone cable that runs between the telephone cabinet and house with a fibre optic cable. The benefit is higher speeds (up to 1Gb/s) and a more reliable service. Councillor Yates has recently led a community project to bring Full Fibre to houses connected along the A4104 between Birlingham and Pershore.

Could something similar be put together for the village with co-operation between households? Councillor Byrne agreed to make some initial enquiries into whether a community project was feasible in Birlingham.

## 16. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

War Memorial

No progress has been made regarding the war memorial. Clerk will ask Wychavon District Council for advice on the listed status of the memorial.

## 17. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting

With nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 21.10pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is on Monday 15 March 2021 (not as previously scheduled) at 7.00pm which is proposed to be held by video conferencing.

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

**Date:** .....

## *Appendix 1 –*

These are the latest COVID-19 statistics for Worcestershire.

**Cases by specimen date, + rate per 100,000**

| District | Recent 7 Days cases | Rate Per 100,000 | Rate per 100,000 over 60s |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bromsgrove | 561 | 562 | 363 |
| Malvern Hills | 273 | 347 | 280 |
| Redditch | 556 | 652 | 459 |
| Worcester | 702 | 694 | 561 |
| Wychavon | 689 | 532 | 424 |
| Wyre Forest | 429 | 424 | 366 |
| **Worcestershire** | **3210** | **539** | **402** |

| West Midlands rate recent 7 days (per 100,000) | England rate recent 7 days (per 100,000) |
|---|---|
| 564 | 520 |

A link takes you to the Worcestershire COVID-19 dashboard which gives more information.

## *Appendix 2- County Councillor Hardman's report including a* **COVID Update 20 January 2021**

*Councillor Adrian Hardman writes*:

Apologies that my first report of the year is a rather bleak one. Confirmed cases in Worcestershire have increased by 26% in the last seven days compared to the previous seven days. Cases in all areas of the county are rising or are level.

- As of today, the Worcestershire rate stands at 534 cases per 100,000. The England rate is 551 per 100,000. The West Midlands rate currently stands at 521 per 100,000. Worcester City now has the highest number of cases in Worcestershire. There are currently 702 cases per 100,000 in Worcester: Bromsgrove has 663 cases, Redditch 590, Wyre Forest 484 and Wychavon 534, while Malvern Hills has 362 cases per 100,000.

- The number of cases in people over the age of 60 currently stands at 365 per 100,000. In that age group there are 508 cases in Worcester, Redditch has 483, there are 391 cases in Bromsgrove, 350 in Wyre Forest, 322 in Wychavon and 212 cases per 100,000 in Malvern Hills. In the last seven days there have been 3221 confirmed cases of coronavirus recorded in Worcestershire.

- There are 234 people in the county's hospitals with COVID-19 in Worcestershire. There are 29 people in ICU. The NHS escalation level is at the highest level of COVID-19 alert escalation. The number of in-patients within our hospitals who have tested positive for COVID-19 has continued to increase. All face-to-face, non-essential countywide community services and out-patient clinics in Worcestershire have been temporarily stood down so that staff can be redeployed into other critical services to support patients.

- 38 care homes in Worcestershire have current outbreaks (more than two cases, linked in time, place or person). 14 homes are currently closed to new admissions due to COVID. The daily registered deaths from all causes is just over the five-year average. We are monitoring this closely.

But the good news is that the area from Ashton to Defford around the hill has the lowest rate in the county of 77 per 100,000, with six new cases in the past seven days; all of our GP-led Primary Care Networks (PCNs) have started running COVID-19 vaccine clinics for eligible patients. Vaccinations are underway at local care homes for residents and staff who are being prioritised with people aged 80 and over. Large vaccination sites are planned at the Artrix in Bromsgrove, St Peter's Church in Worcester and the Three Counties Showground in Malvern. Here2Help Worcestershire is open and available to support those who need assistance. We are monitoring the number of calls to the helpline. There is in excess of three months stock for all PPE items at current issue rates. In line with lockdown restrictions, all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges have moved to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Lateral Flow testing in secondary schools is well underway.

The county's libraries remain open for essential computer use to help residents with digital access. All our Household Recycling Centres remain open.

**Adult Services**

- 38 care homes in Worcestershire have current outbreaks.
- 14 homes are currently closed to new admissions due to COVID and 2 homes have temporarily ceased trading (residents moved to other homes owned by the same provider on the same site).
- We have been in contact with care home owners with regard to limited and controlled visits to care home residents from their families. These are able to continue if they are in line with the lockdown restrictions. Advice and guidance is being shared to families.

**Children's Services**

- In line with lockdown restrictions all primary schools, secondary schools and colleges have moved to remote learning, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Early years provision is remaining open to all children.

- Registration Services will continue to be open but by appointment only, with limitations to available services during the national lockdown. COVID Advisors, recruited by Worcestershire Regulatory Services, continue to be deployed and working closely with the Police.

**Economy & Infrastructure**

- All Household Recycling Centres will remain open during the lockdown. Highways maintenance works and our major construction projects continue to operate safely. We currently have two highways gangs absent due to the workforce self-isolating.

- Major infrastructure project work continues, within current COVID restrictions.

- 7% of Worcestershire employees were furloughed through the job retention scheme at the end of October.

We are responding to the ongoing winter weather events safely and within the current COVID restrictions.

## *Appendix 3 – Clerk's Report*

**Lengthsman**

Reporting:

**COVID-19**

5 January

*"Dear June*

*Following the announcement by the Prime Minister regarding the lock down and the previous guidance from WCC regarding the Lengthsman works I will continue to carry out essential works only in the Parish.*

*This will be subject to any further Government announcements or instructions from WCC.*

*I will be complying with the COVID 19 compliance regulations and in accordance with the C19 risk assessments drawn up under the last lockdown.*

*If you or your Councillors feel that you wish to temporarily suspend the Lengthsman duties in your Parish, please let me know.*

*I will only be carrying out essential works and generally do not come into contact with other people during my visits but I will be making extra efforts to avoid non-essential contact."*

13 January COVID-19 Pandemic - Lengthsman Scheme

From County Highways Liaison Engineer

*"Dear Parish Clerk*

*With regards to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, please be aware that you and your Lengthsman are required to follow the latest government updates when considering Lengthsman work."*

**Birlingham House**

6 December – "drainage crew (Highways) outside the property"

21 December – "I spoke to Severn Trent when they were putting a camera up the drain last week. The chamber and pipework is part of an old disused system (might be the 'old village drain') which is why we can't see any water in it.
Wait for the final report but I think we can discount that as part of the problem further up."

Clerk had reported this 13/11 - Reference Number 948767

*Previous report 947657 asking for further details as below.*
*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.*

*There has been an update to the Highway issue you reported at LOWER END*
*Your Reported Issue was:*
*Broken pipes in verge - there appears to be a chamber  This fault report has attached photos.*

*Highway update*
MRM 12/11/20 - emailed Parish Clerk information about drainage system



**Lower End**

Broadway Road

- Reference Number 947629 - large pothole

Update:  10th December 2020 Thank you for your enquiry. The given location was inspected today and the pothole is now due to be repaired shortly.

- Reference Number 962022 – blocked gully

Update:  17/12/2020 -  we have inspected the site and have raised a four-week order for the gully to be jetted

- Reference Number 969671 – potholes

Update: 11/01/21 Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site at the location and have raised a four-week order

**Eckington Road**

Dairy Cottage

"On my rounds today, I noticed that the ditch that runs through the garden of Dairy Cottage alongside Eckington Road appears to be filled with sand. This was probably caused by the recent jetting that was carried out at Upper End.

If I recall correctly (I may be mistaken) this was an open ditch until the garden boundary where it goes under the road and joins the highway system. In times of heavy rainfall, the ditch overflows and runs through Porter's field to emerge in New Barn Lane at the junction.

As this ditch takes all the water from Upper End if it is blocked it would put the householders at Dairy Cottage at risk of flooding as well as causing issues for the highway.

As it is on private land, I cannot investigate so it may worth contacting them and asking them to check that it is clear."

**Drainage / Flooding**

**A4104**

24 December - Chairman

*"The A4104 near the top of my drive is still barely passable this morning. Some cars are turning around. So, as we have suspected the water in the ditch has nowhere to go and once full backs up onto the road.*

19 January - Lengthsman

*"I have inspected the work carried out on the A4104 and Highways have cleared the outlets from the ditch which now would seem to go to the highway drainage as a gully grid is adjacent. The ditch however is poorly maintained and there is no reserve capacity.*

*The eye drains on the opposite side of the road have been cleared and the outlets exposed which discharge into the ditch in Revell's field.*

*This should provide some relief from the usual rainfall but in times of inundation I think that the ditch may well overflow again.*

*At least now I can keep the outlets clear.*

*In other respects, the village seems to be in good order apart from the known issues which are ongoing.*





**Hills Cottage** – blocked gullies

- Reference Number 955733

Update - 11/12/2020 Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site at location provided and have checked the gully and it seems to be clear but we will continue to monitor.

- Reference Number 974970 – opposite cottage

**Manor House / The Moors**

14 December

Lengthsman

*"I have reported the over-flowing grid opposite the Manor House. That gully has been blocked for years. They have looked at it a couple of times but never cleared it.*

*I think the water is from the drain which runs across 2 Lower End / Peacock Barn field into Moorsfield paddock then on into The Moors' garden pond. I could be wrong, but I think that the overflow from the pond discharges somewhere onto the Manor House field next door hence the water."*

15 December

*"I have been investigating the problem at The Moors. The homeowner has had the drainage investigated. The water is running full bore and causing the flooding on the carriageway.*

*From the pond it shows a pipe running to another inspection chamber situated in the 'Paddock' field of The Manor house before running to another chamber near the bad band and thence to double inspection chambers and a junction situated in the Manor House lower field.*

*I will let you know how I go on but if you can have a word with someone at Highways or Severn Trent to see who owns the pipe that would be a good start*."

Clerk has confirmation from Highways

*The systems in the area coming across the fields are STW Section 104 pipes (A Section 104 agreement (under the Water Industry Act 1991) is an agreement between a developer and sewerage undertaker for the adoption of sewers serving a development. This would be STW's issue to address.*

17 December – Clerk reports to STW

22/12 – Peacock Barn reports that "STW were in the location."
23/12 – Lengthsman – "ST have acknowledged that it is their pipework and the team are trying to trace the manhole chamber in The Manor House garage field adjacent to The Moors.
Clerk - Quote .... we have to raise a follow on to repair the sewer. We are currently in the process of doing all our underground checks to make sure that it is safe for the work to be carried out. Once this is done, we will carry out the work and sort this issue.
"Concerns over icy road."

4 January – Clerk informs landowners / parties

*Severn Trent came out on 24th December and returned last week saying that they had identified a collapse and a digger was needed today.*
*I had a call from the crew on site this morning and have just returned home. There is a collapse in Paddock field which was camered (near the bend) but they also lifted the inspection in the road (other-side of The Manor wall) and that's not flowing fully it needs jetting. The pipe from the road gully is blocked as well. I have asked that the drainage be cleared from Millennium Wood track downwards. The Coach House jetting was carried out last week but only from the Old Coach House to the Wood.*

*The crew have gone back to the depot for further machinery. There appears to be several unsolved issues and queries including 1) the pond 2) the collapse and possibly further blockages - top and bottom fields still to be investigated and 3) the road.*

*I have asked for an update.*

4 January

Landowner – "*Two teams came out on 31st and found a number of extra problems. I spoke to Severn Trent this morning and was told that the diggers would be here today to deal with the collapse*."

Reply from Clerk visiting site. *The 2-man team that have been here all day are waiting for further backup from jesters/camera crews. They have been monitoring the pond which has gone down about 12" since the mini digger uncovered the broken chamber/ collar*.

6 January - Lengthsman

"*They have found the blockage and cleared it. Probably a root in the pipe. Water not running in the road at the moment."*

8/1 – landowner asking for update as large pit in the paddock.

9/1 – Clerk update - The only information I can obtain at the moment is that works are still due, but I have not been given a day. The contractors are apparently going to contact me.

## Overhanging Tree – Birlingham House

Clerk contacted the homeowner and the tree branch has been cut down. The homeowner was thanked for their response.

## Road Closures

**New Barn Lane** - 941953

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (New Barn Lane, Birlingham) (Temporary Closure) Order 2021
Order made: to close that part of New Barn Lane from its junction with B4080 Eckington Road to its junction with U46414 The Avenue.
Reason: **Carriageway Works.**
Alternative route: U46414 The Avenue, C2271 Upper End, A4104 Defford Road, B4080 Eckington Road and vice versa.
Maximum duration: 18 Months. Anticipated duration: 19 days Commencing: **1 February** 2021

**Lower End** - 941997

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Lower End, Birlingham) (Temporary Closure) Order 2021
Order made: to close that part of Lower End from its junction with U46418 Berwick Lane to its junction with U46416 Church Street.
Reason: **Carriageway Works.**
Alternative route: C2271 Broadway Road, U46414 The Avenue, C2271 The Lower End and vice versa.
Maximum duration: 18 Months. Anticipated duration: 19 days Commencing: **1 February** 2021

**Lower End** – 935166
WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC NOTICE
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
(C2271 Broadway Road, Birlingham)(Temporary Closure) Order 2021
Proposed Order: to close that part of C2271 Broadway Road from its junction with C2271 Lower End for a distance of 250 metres in a north easterly direction.
Reason: **Telecomms Work** (Connection) by Openreach.
Alternative route: C2271 Broadway Road, U46416 Church Street, U46414 The Avenue, C2271 Lower End and vice versa.
Maximum duration: 18 Months. Anticipated duration: 2 days Commencing: **11 February** 2021

## Winter Grants Fund

Email from Kate Walton, Grants Manager, Pershore Volunteer Centre

Message put on Forum and Birlingham News (27 January)

> *Good afternoon*
> *Thank you for your support in circulating information about this fund - I have already received enquiries and some applications!*
>
> *There are just a few points of clarification I need to make; in case anyone needs more information:*
>
> - *I have a finite pot of money to be allocated by 31st March, so I would need to have any applications by 25/26 March unless the money has been spent before then. I will send out a message if the fund closes early.*

- *I want to emphasise that applications for financial support cannot be approved: the fund specifies that support must be in the form of food, utilities, or other essential goods. There is a statement to this effect before the signature panel on the form.*

- *I'd also like to remind you that Pershore Volunteer Centre is available to provide transport for anyone needing help to attend a Covid vaccination appointment as well as other medical appointments or for essential shopping. All of our volunteer drivers have been trained to observe Covid-safe procedures, and if you know of anyone who would like to join our team, please ask them to get in touch with the Volunteer Centre.*

**Whitehall Lane**

Reply from owner to Clerk

5 December

*"I have distributed the papers to the various occupants of the farmyard as promised and spoken to most of them including the gamekeeper.*

*Quite a quantity of delivery vehicles seem to be using the lane and turning round in the farmyard.*

*Everyone I spoke to seems anxious to help so hopefully things will improve."*

**Director for Public Health in Worcestershire**

Put on Forum and Birlingham News and posters put on website

Message from Dr Kathryn Cobain, Director for Public Health in Worcestershire

Dear Residents,

I know that the news of a new lockdown for England, will be frustrating and upsetting for many people. Worcestershire has tried very hard to keep Covid-19 cases down, and many of you have made sacrifices to protect yourselves and others. We have all had to make changes to the way we live our lives in recent months, and that included over Christmas, when so many were not able to spend time with loved ones.

But some stark realities remain for us all. Worcestershire's infection rates are at the highest we have ever seen. In the past 7 days alone, the county has 1,888 positive Covid-19 cases, which is more than all positive cases seen during May, June, July, August and September 2020 combined. I am concerned about this level of spread, and the risk it poses to our health and the lives of our vulnerable and elderly residents. We need to act now to protect one another, prevent the virus spreading further and reduce the demand on our hospitals.

The pandemic continues to dominate our daily lives, cases are rising nationally and we know the new variant of Covid-19 spreads very quickly. Our NHS is also facing considerable pressure on its services. All of these factors have led to the government's announcement of a new lockdown across England. This means once again, we are facing tough restrictions on our way of life. I know this is hard, but by doing as we are asked, we are saving lives. The restrictions have been brought in to protect every one of us.

Please now stay at home, don't go out unless you need to, for example to buy food or collect medicines. The Government has set out the clear limitations of the lockdown and I ask you to read the restrictions and follow the rules. You can read a full explanation of all the restrictions on the government's website; https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home

Once again, Worcestershire County Council's Here2Help service is available to anyone who needs support or is clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding). If you have no-one to turn to for help, our service can respond and provide help such as collecting medicines and getting shopping. You can reach the service online; https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help

If you are on the Government's shielding list, you will be receiving guidance about what to do now. It is key that you socially distance, and you reduce your physical contact with others. The governments webpages are updated regularly and you can read detailed guidance at; https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

While we are all at home, please do remember to check on vulnerable or isolated residents. Just a phone call or a text message can provide a vital link to the outside world, and can ensure those who need comfort or help, have someone to turn to.

You will know that a programme of vaccination has begun nationally, and we are already seeing Worcestershire residents receiving the first doses. This process is being co-ordinated by central Government and following a strict order for administering the doses. Worcestershire County Council is supporting NHS colleagues to ensure the roll-out is progressing. The vaccines are safe, and if you are called forward to receive one, I strongly urge you to do so. In the meantime, please keep following the rules, wear face coverings, wash your hands, keep your distance. These simple measures help reduce the spread of the virus.

We are all in this together. Throughout the pandemic, you have shown your resilience, kindness and compassion for others. We have seen many examples of people supporting one another, lending a hand, or going the extra mile. The situation has demonstrated how working together, we are able to support one another and get through. I am asking you to do this once again. The single most important thing you can do for everyone, is to stay home. Please do this for yourself and for others. We all want to protect people who are precious to us, our family and friends. Let's take care of each other and work together.

Thank you for doing this. Our actions now will hopefully bring brighter days for us all in 2021.

**Litter Pick**

28/11 - Clerk saw Philly White and fed back to her about the rubbish removal in Swans Neck and Asham track for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme boys, Henry White and his friend Jack Marsh.

## ..... Birlingham News .....

### Extracts of interest

Birlingham **News 235 – 25 November**

This week's News contains a first briefing on next year's National Census and a round-up of last week's Parish Council meeting.

In this issue:

1. St James' Church Services – December
2. Census 2021 – a snapshot of modern society
3. St James' Christmas Cards and Stocking Fillers
4. Dog Fouling
5. Parish Council Report
6. Parish Council Report – Birlingham Roads and Flooding Issues
7. Planning Applications

2. Census 2021 – a snapshot of modern society

Households across Worcestershire will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

'A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed,' Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at the Office for National Statistics, said.

'This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That's why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them.'

Census day will be on 21st March, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit census.gov.uk.

4. Dog Fouling

*The Parish Clerk writes*:

There is a continuing problem with dog mess in Birlingham, particularly outside certain properties. Not only does this create an unhealthy and unclean environment, it is also an offence and dog owners can be fined up to £1,000 if they do not clean up after their dogs.

Full details are available at http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk/dog-service/dog-fouling.aspx.

We would like to keep our roads and public rights of way clean and pleasant to walk on, so if you see anyone's dog making a mess, please remind their owners to clean it up. The recently erected advisory signs are there for people in the village to challenge individuals who do not pick up after their dogs. There are waste bins in the parish that can be used, and these are emptied regularly.

There is no such thing as the Dog Poo Fairy!

It is recommended by the RSPCA and the Dogs Trust that dogs are kept on leads. This is particularly important at the moment during the coronavirus pandemic.

Dog services (including the dog warden), pest control, pollution control, trading standards and other services in the county are operated by a single body, Worcestershire Regulatory Services. For more information, go to http://www.worcsregservices.gov.uk.

5. Parish Council Report

*Ian Yates writes*:

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting by videoconference at 7.00pm on Wednesday 18th November. Attendees at the meeting discussed the following:

Worcestershire County Councillor's Report

Adrian Hardman reported that there had been a 33% increase in COVID cases with the biggest increase in the over-60 age group. With the potential availability of a vaccine, there was a lot of planning taking place on how best to vaccinate 570,000 people. Consideration is being given to creating two inoculation centres to avoid having to disrupt Primary Care. The target would be to vaccinate 50,000 people a day, starting in January. Each person would need two jabs.

Birlingham roads and flooding issues

See separate item below.

SmartWater
As previously reported, the Parish Council decided to fund the provision of SmartWater so that it was free to all Birlingham residents. Councillor Paula Aston has been registering and distributing SmartWater kits to all Birlingham properties that have signed up for the scheme. If you haven't yet signed up, please contact Paula at paula_mann@hotmail.com as there are still kits available. The Parish Council thanks Paula for her efforts in getting this scheme completed.

Millennium Bench
Councillor Maxine Cook reported that a contractor has now been identified to restore and then reinstall the bench. The Parish Council approved the revised cost. An area on the village green will need to be levelled and prepared for the bench installation. If anyone has a mini digger that could be used to do this, could they please contact the Clerk, June Hiden at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk.

21/22 Precept
A budget meeting has been held to discuss setting the parish precept for 21/22 based on government guidelines. It was agreed to submit a 2% increase, equivalent to 92p per property.

Planning
A planning application has been received from Orchard Hill, Upper End for the erection of a two-storey extension.

Litter Pick
Due to COVID restrictions the normal annual litter pick did not take place this year. However, the Parish Council has been told that Henry White and a friend have decided to fulfil their Duke of Edinburgh Award by undertaking a two-hour litter pick around the village once a week for six months. We are sure this will be much appreciated by everyone in the village.

Remembrance Day
The Remembrance Day Service was, as previously reported, severely restricted by the COVID lockdown. However, Councillor Maxine Cook laid the village wreath in Eckington and Councillor Julia

Parish Council Report – Birlingham Roads and Flooding Issues

*Ian Yates writes*:

The Parish Council discussed a number of highways concerns.

Roads and Flooding

- Broadway Road at Lower End is now in a poor state of repair. Councillor Julia Luff has been working with Adrian Hardman of Worcestershire County Council to address this. It will be dealt with through a two-step process; firstly, patch and repair the foundations and then surface dress later. It is hoped the patch and repair work can be done in the first half of next year. This will be from the junction between Broadway and Grange Road all the way round Broadway Road to the junction between Shorthill and Church Street.

- 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 last winter and in recent months during heavy rain. This was reported by the Clerk and jetting teams have been out to unblock drains and clear ditches, which it is hoped will alleviate the problem.

- Hills Cottage, Upper End. Blocked drains have been cleared.

- Water flooding from manhole in front garden of The Old Coach House. Severn Trent Water have attended and a new pipe is required as the old one is blocked by tree roots.

Traffic movements

- Whitehall Lane. The Parish Council was contacted in September by a resident of Whitehall Lane concerned about an increase in the volume of traffic and speed. Councillor Maxine Cook, who lives in Whitehall Lane, has been monitoring the situation. It was decided that the Parish Council would contact the owner of Hall Farm and, with their agreement, write to the tenants/licensees.

- Church Lane. Councillor Michael Porter has arranged for overhanging tree branches on Church Lane to be cut back to avoid high-sided vehicles.

7. Planning Applications

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

- Orchard Hill, Upper End: Erection of two storey side extension, replacement of porch, and single storey rear extension to replace conservatory (Case No. 20/02501). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 17th December.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

Birlingham **News 236 - 9 December**

The Christmas Celebration at the church is fully subscribed but there are no limits for the Christmas Day Communion.

In this issue:

1. Christmas Services
2. 2021 Bulb Teas
3. Found Cat
4. Christmas Bin Collections
5. Catalytic Converter Thefts
6. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

Birlingham **News 237 - 18 December**

This is the final round-up of news before Christmas – there will be no Birlingham News next Wednesday. Merry Christmas to you all!

In this issue:

1. Christmas & New Year at The Swan Inn
2. Christmas Day Service
3. Cuppa & Chat
4. Christmas Bin Collections
5. Bird Flu Outbreak
6. Planning Applications

Bird Flu Outbreak

Following the outbreak of bird flu in Worcestershire, Wychavon District Council has issued advice for the public and anyone who keeps poultry or pet birds.

This advice can be viewed at www.birlingham.org/docs/birdflu_2020.pdf.

Planning Applications

The following planning application has been determined by Wychavon District 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). Approved. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website

**Birlingham News 238 – 6 January**

With the third national lockdown now in force, here are some updates from village organisations.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham Volunteers
2. Birlingham Village Forum
3. Church News
4. Bulb Teas
5. Birlingham IW

1. Birlingham Volunteers

Ian Yates writes:

Birlingham Volunteers available to provide support during January/February 2021 lockdown

With the announcement of a new lockdown on Monday 4th January, the Parish Council would like to remind you that the Birlingham Volunteers group, which was set up in March last year, is still available to help where possible.

- The volunteer group is there to support anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable and needs to self-isolate or has reason to quarantine due to suspected infection or a positive test result.
- Volunteers will do their best to help with essential food shopping and the collection of prescriptions (where not delivered by the surgery).
- Volunteers will use a WhatsApp group (Birlingham Volunteers) to co-ordinate their response to requests for help.
- To request help, call one of the following central contacts:

- Paula Aston – 07932 637746
- Nick Baskerville – 01386 751136
- Marion New – 07867 796044

• If there is no answer, leave a message. Please be sure to clearly state your name, address and telephone number. The central contacts will then arrange via the WhatsApp group for an available volunteer to call you back and provide assistance.

• You must follow all the guidelines to protect volunteers and yourself from infection; wear a face mask, wash your hands and keep your distance. Shopping will be left on your doorstep and cash should be placed in an envelope.

2. Birlingham Village Forum

The Village Forum has been set up by the Jubilee Committee for villagers to exchange news during these difficult times. For example, the latest post asks for help in locating Ivy, the black and white cat, who has gone missing again. There is also detailed information about the volunteers' group, which will be updated as circumstances change. Please feel free to post any messages that you think may be of interest to other residents or reply to posts from other people.

The forum can be accessed from the Home page of the village website, www.birlingham.org, or directly at http://www.birlingham.org/forum/phpBB3. (If you are typing the address in a web browser rather than clicking on the link make sure the BB3 at the end is in capitals.) On the first screen, click on 'Birlingham Village Forum' in the centre of the screen. The topics (messages) are listed. To read any of these, click on the blue subject title.

Detailed instructions on how to read messages, register, log in, add new messages or reply to messages are given in www.birlingham.org/docs/forum_basic.pdf

Due to a continuing onslaught by spammers, we have had to restrict access to residents of Birlingham, their family and friends, and the Forum email address has been overwhelmed by unwelcome messages. If you do not yet have a username and would like to post a message, please email us at news@birlingham.org and we will set up an account for you.

If you have any difficulty accessing the forum, need help with using it or have any other queries, please email us at news@birlingham.org.

Birlingham **News 239 – 14 January**
A week into the lockdown, we have details of further closures and links to useful information relating to the pandemic.

In this issue:

1. Richard Foulkes
2. St James' Church – Cancellation of Services
3. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 20th January
4. Swan Inn Closure
5. Message from Wychavon District Council
6. Bystander Archives on the Village Website
7. Planning Applications

Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 20th January

The next meeting of Birlingham Parish Council takes place on Wednesday 20th January 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.

Message from Wychavon District Council

Wychavon District Council has sent a message including a COVID-19 update for the district, details of help available, the impact on services, lateral flow testing and vaccine information. The full message is on the Village Forum.

Planning Applications

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

Orchard Hill, Upper End: Erection of two storey side extension, replacement of porch, and single storey rear extension to replace conservatory (Case No. 20/02501). Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website