Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19 May 2021

via videoconference

Councillors:

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

Present:

County Councillor Adrian Hardman and Katie Parsons

Welcome

1. Election of Chair

Councillor Ian Yates was willing to continue as Chairman. It was agreed unanimously to elect Councillor Yates as Chairman and he will sign the Declaration of Office.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Paula Aston wished to continue as Vice-Chairwoman. Councillors voted and Councillor Aston was elected.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by District Councillor Ron Davis who had a meeting at Wychavon District Council, the Lengthsman, Carl Brassington, the Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward and Tree Warden, Rupert Keys.

4. 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.

5. Council's scheme of delegation and to appoint members

a) Appointment of Financial Support Officer. Councillor Terry Griffin is happy to continue with his role advising and supporting the Parish Council and is duly appointed.
b) Appointment of Footpath Warden under the authority of Worcestershire County Council. Bruce Hayward has confirmed he is happy to continue in his role as the Footpath Warden and this was agreed. All Councillors said that Bruce does an excellent job. They also gave thanks to Mark Smith who assists Bruce in his public rights of way maintenance role.

c) Appointment of a Lengthsman. Carl Brassington agreed to continue as the Lengthsman on a contractual basis. A copy of his current business insurance policy, showing his indemnity, is held on record. The Annual Agreement (the Parish Lengthsman Scheme) for the undertaking of minor highway maintenance works between Worcestershire County Council and the Parish Council has been returned to County Hall (April 2021).

d) Appointment of Tree Warden. Rupert Keys has recently taken on the role of Tree Warden and will continue.

e) Planning Group. The Group is made up of all Councillors and they actively take part in the consultation process. It was agreed that the Group will continue to be headed by Councillor Steven Byrne as the Planning Co-ordinator. He will lead on the communications exchange between Councillors and collate an overall view to pass to the Clerk for submission to the Local Planning Authority.

6. Confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover

The Parish Council is required by law to assess, at least annually, the risk of its various activities and to update its insurance and asset register. This was agreed, with a public liability of up to £5 million for any one event, with an example being the litter pick.
The understanding for the Insurers (Zurich) is that: the precept is under £25,000, the wages are under £20,000, All Risk's total is under £10,000 (bench, kiosk, and strimmer) and there are no major events or public services undertaken during the year on behalf of the Parish Council.

All Councillors are aware of the policy document. This has been reviewed and is accepted.

7. Review of the Council's subscriptions to other bodies

The Parish Council subscribes to the Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils (CALC), which is a member organisation offering support, training, seminars, advice, and guidance to parish councils. The charges for the current financial year have been received and are to be agreed at agenda item 12.

All Councillors are aware of what CALC does and the service it provides which is an important backup and useful membership to the Parish Council. The subscription was reviewed and accepted.

8. Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings and the next annual meeting of the Parish Council

A discussion took place on the Parish Council's annual review of the time and place of ordinary bi-monthly meetings. It was proposed and agreed that the meetings will continue to commence at 7pm on Wednesdays. Birlingham Village Hall is the usual venue and has been booked in advance. However, the members will not return to face-to-face meetings until after July.

It was agreed that the annual meeting of the Parish Council will take place in May 2022. Councillor Porter has researched the idea of a return this year to groups' meeting but the government guidelines on Covid meant this was not possible. The date and time was deferred and will be agreed later in the year. The Chairman will review the meeting arrangements and decide on the possibilities for it.

9. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021, 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, however there was nothing further to report.

10. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden: Footpath 522 (Nafford Weir) – waymarking replaced.

b) Tree Warden: nothing further to report as per the Annual Parish meeting.

c) District Councillor: none

d) County Councillor:

County Councillor Hardman was thanked for his full report given at the earlier meeting. He mentioned the following points from this meeting and gave his support for any further funding from the Local Members fund:

i. Lengthsman – a) if there is a shortage of funds because of how the village mileage is calculated in the scheme. b) the grass cutting was a month late and the visibility spray at the Upper End junction was particularly bad.
ii. The Broadband scheme.
iii. The need for any architect scaled drawings needed for the war memorial to progress with the New Homes Bonus application.

Councillor Hardman was thanked for his time and effort with the continued support in Birlingham.

e) Clerk - See ***Appendix 1*** Information from the Lengthsman is included.

11. Planning

a) Planning applications pending

i. 21/00370/LB – The Row Lower End
18no replacement windows Listed building consent

Parish Council comments: The Parish Council support the application but would expect the appointed planning officer to assess the appropriateness of the proposed window specification in relation to the building and its prominent location.

ii. 21/00833/HP – 3 Court Cottages, Upper End WR10 3AA
Opening up of existing internal and external doorways and installation of new roof lights.

iii. 21/00834/LB – 3 Court Cottages, Upper End WR10 3AA
Opening up of existing internal and external doorways and installation of new roof lights
Listed Building consent

Parish Council comments:

The Parish council have no objections to the proposals, themselves, with the proposals improving the usage of the accommodation, with little to no detrimental effect on the building or surrounding properties. However, we would rely on the appointed planning officer to ensure the detailed design and materials are appropriate.

b) Applications granted – none

c) Enforcement – none

12. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2020/2021

i. Bank balance is £6,831.41 as at 31 March 2021 and as shown on the spreadsheet, as per the financial year end 2020/2021and as per the audited financial year end.

The resolution of the Audit is below.

b) The Accounts for year 2021/2022 (current financial year) have been reviewed by Councillor Griffin and the Clerk. The 'Provisions' summary will be 'tidied' up.

i) Bank balance is £10,374.41 as at 30 April 2021 for Treasurers account. Balance is £6,790.15 for Business Instant account as at 9 April 2021.

ii) Receipts –

i. £3,393.00 – Wychavon District Council (Grant £90.00 + Precept £3,303.00)
ii. £180.00 – Worcestershire County Council (Lengthsman January)
iii. £120.00 – Worcestershire County Council (Lengthsman February)

Councillor Griffin has chased HMRC and has been told that the VAT refund claim was paid into the bank on 12 May 2021. Clerk will confirm receipt.

iii) Payments –

i. £180.00 – Lengthsman January 2021
ii. £120.00 – Lengthsman February 2021

c) Future payments for consideration

i. Clerks 2020/2021 specific expenses – Clerk to query any outstanding
ii. £225.80 – CALC (service charge per elector £171.28 net and Nalc affiliation fee £20.26*) (previously £233.62)*
iii. £257.60 – Zurich Insurance 1/6/21 – 31/5/22 (same cost of previous year)
iv. £187.50 – Lengthsman April 2021
v. Birlingham Village Hall will not invoice until a firm decision has been made on returning meetings to the Hall.

Note: The Lengthsman summary for 2020/2021 was presented. The Lengthsman is now required to submit his timesheet electronically to the Clerk for submission. The Scheme for 2021/2022 continued despite financial pressures on Worcestershire County Council at the same funding level as the previous year at £1,780.15.
Carl Brassington's Certificate of Insurance including public liability has been received (5/2021).

d) Savings account. The transfer of £1,000.00 from the current account to the savings account will be actioned by the Clerk.

e) Internal Audit was completed on 13 May 2021 for the Annual Internal Audit report of the Annual Return. This has been signed. There were no findings.

f) Certificate of Exemption (page 3) – the date for the external audit from PKF Littlejohn has been received and will be returned by 30 June 2021. Clerk to action.

Copies of the Annual Return (plus variances greater than 15% this financial year and bank reconciliation) have been sent to all Councillors.

g) Approval of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 2:

Section 1: The Annual Governance Statement (page 5) 2020-2021

All Councillors agreed with Section 1.

h) Approval of the Annual Return (AGAR):

Section 2: The Accounting Statements (page 6)

All Councillors agreed with Section 2.

All Councillors agreed with the Annual Return for the external auditor, and it was therefore resolved that the Exemption was complete.

Clerk to display the completed Annual Return (pages 4, 5 and 6), the Certificate of Exemption Notice and the Notice after this meeting on village website.

13. SmartWater

The SmartWater funding was received from the "We Don't buy Crime" (WDBC), Police and Crime Commissioner grant and with support from County Councillor Hardman. There are no more kits, but they can be obtained from the WDBC. Councillor Aston to contact new residents. Signage to promote the scheme is still to arrive.

14. Millennium Bench

Councillor Maxine Cook gave an update regarding the restoration of the bench. It will need substantial repairs due to its poor condition. The various substances used over the years to paint it have proved difficult to remove and have stopped the wood from breathing. The slats are rotten and some legs need replacing. Clarian will restore it back to its original specification with the budget being used for materials but the labour will be done by the company. Councillors have received a full report.

It was agreed that the bench will have a removable section so that there is access to the inner side. The bench will be placed around the time capsule on the village green. It is hoped the bench can be returned early June. Rupert Keys has offered to level the ground and assist but is busy at this time. Councillor Cook will visit Clarian at their workshop.

Thanks were given to Councillor Cook for her time.

15. Full Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premises – FTTP)

Councillors' Yates and Byrne gave an update on the Rural Gigabit voucher scheme where it is proposes to connect Broadband through fibre inside of the copper lines. Councillor Steven Byre will draft an explanatory letter for the residents, and this will go out to the whole village with the Bystander deliveries shortly. The letter will further explain FTTP and that expressing interest by residents and businesses is not a commitment at the initial stage. Councillor Michael Porter will assist with setting up an email address for the project. There will be a reminder follow up in the Birlingham News. The village will be split into three areas to allow follow up by members of the parish council. Councillor Steven Byrne (lead) with Councillor Julia Luff to cover Lower End, Councillor Terry Griffin (lead) and Councillor Maxine Cook will do the village centre and Councillor Michael Porter (lead) with Councillor Paula Aston will do Upper End. Councillor Ian Yates is proposing to use the village map to divide up the properties.

There will be a further update at the next meeting.

16. Councillors' reports and items for future agenda

Telephone kiosk – can it be used? It is looking untidy and in need of some replacement panes and painting. It is a British icon. A message will be placed in the Birlingham News for residents' ideas as it looks neglected. Clerk to action.

Grass cutting – the visibility splay at Upper End needs mowing. County Councillor Hardman said the cutting is behind due to the weather and there is a policy usually 'no mow in May'. The village verges have been cut but not the main roads. Clerk will speak to Councillor Hardman if this is missed.

Upper End signage – the sign is propped upright but needs replacing. Clerk to action.

War memorial – Clerk to source drawings for a listing building consent application to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Councillor Hardman would assist with the costs.

17. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting - with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.40pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 7.00pm which is proposed to be held by video conferencing.

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

Date: ……..……..……

Appendix 1 – Clerk's Report

Lengthsman

Reporting:

Upper End

Reference Number 1000209 – blocked gully

> Reply: 31/03/21 *Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site and have raised a four-week order*

Reference Number 1000207 – pothole

> Reply: 31/03/21 *Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site and have raised a one-week order for repair*

Reference Number 1000206 – pothole

> Reply: 31/03/21 *Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site and have raised a one-week order for repair*

Reference Number 1048315 - blocked gully outside Maryworth Barn

Reference Number 1049073 – gully opposite Court Lodge

Grange Lane

Reference Number 1036791 - road subsiding outside Avon Cottage

> Reply: 27/04/21 *Thank you for your enquiry we have inspected the site and there is no safety issue but we will continue to monitor*

Clerks and Councils Direct

17 March acknowledge of cancellation

Clerk notified 'Clerks and Councils Direct and Local Councils Update' (based in Stanton, Bury St Edmunds) that their circular was no longer required, as agreed by all Councillors.

CALC Councillors' survey

CALC requested that as it was the anniversary of the County going into its first national lockdown that feedback on the role, support and how things have changed for the Parish Council might be helpful in training and support.

Chairman actioned the survey.

Birlingham News (extracts of relevance)

Birlingham **News 244 - 24 March**

The Swan Inn is hoping to reopen in April, St James' Church is asking for your views and we have a very full report from the Parish Council meeting.

In this issue:

1. Peter Quarrell
2. Swan Inn Reopening, Wednesday 14th April
3. The Future of St James the Great – Village Survey, Closing date Thursday 1st April
4. Parish Council Report
5. Parish Council Report – Birlingham Roads and Flooding Issues
6. Parish Council Report – Annual Parish Meeting in May
7. Update from Adrian Hardman, Worcestershire County Council (10/3/2021)

Birlingham News 245 - 31 March

You have one week left to get your entries in for the Bystander photo competition – details below.

In this issue:

1. St James' Church Services – April
2. The Future of St James the Great – Village Survey, closing date Thursday 1st April
3. Bystander Photo Competition
4. Changes to Bird Flu restrictions
5. Rural Beat Newsletter

4. Changes to Bird Flu restrictions

Ian Dipple writes:

The Government has confirmed that the requirement for keepers of birds and poultry, including in private gardens, to keep them housed will be lifted on 31st March. Biosecurity measures will remain in place though and keepers of birds and poultry are asked to spend the next few days making preparations should they wish to allow their birds to wander around again.

Details are available at www.birlingham.org/docs/birdflu_2021.pdf.

5. Rural Beat Newsletter

The latest edition of the 'Rural Beat' newsletter published by West Mercia Police's Rural and Business Team is now available. The issue includes items on coronavirus and thefts of quad bikes, as well as photographs of police officers interviewing assorted alpacas and sheep.

The police newsletter can be downloaded at www.birlingham.org/docs/ruralbeat_spring_2021.pdf

Birlingham News 246 – 14 April

The next stage in the relaxation of COVID restrictions began on Monday, and the Swan Inn reopens today.

In this issue:

1. Swan Inn Reopening, Wednesday 14th April
2. St James's Church News
3. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

Birlingham News 247 – 29 April

Some good news at last – the Flower & Produce Show is back on this year.

In this issue:

1. Peter Curnock
2. St James' Church Services – May
3. Flower & Produce Show 2021
4. Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter
5. Planning Applications

4. Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter

The latest edition of the Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter, 'Our News', contains information about the NHW 'Protect Your Car' campaign and details of the forthcoming National Neighbourhood Watch Week, which will run from 5th to 11th June.

5. Planning Applications

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

- The Row, Lower End: 18no replacement windows (Listed Building Consent) (Case No. 21/00370). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 14th May.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

- 3 Court Cottages, Upper End: Opening up of existing internal and external doorways and installation of new roof lights (Case No. 21/00833; Listed Building Consent Case No. 21/00834). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 27th May.)

Birlingham News 248 – 12 May

The Annual Parish Meeting takes place next week, your chance to have your say on local matters.

In this issue:

1. Annual Parish Meeting & Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 19th May
2. County Council Election Results
3. Millennium Map
4. Waste and Recycling Survey, closing date Sunday 16th May
5. Age UK Dementia Action Week Webinars, Tuesday 18th May & Thursday 20th May
6. Vacancies on the Worcestershire Independent Remuneration Panel, closing date Thursday 10th June
7. Bystander Archives on the Village Website

1. Annual Parish Meeting & Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 19th May

The Annual Parish Meeting takes place on Wednesday 19th May 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).

This meeting will receive reports from various village organisations about their activities during the year.

During the meeting there is an opportunity to express your views on local issues. Items for discussion 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.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be followed by the regular bi-monthly Parish Council meeting.

2. County Council Election Results

At the County Council elections last Thursday, Councillor Adrian Hardman was re-elected for the Bredon ward, which includes Birlingham. The result for the ward was as follows:

- Adrian Hardman (Conservative): 2417 (68.2%)
- Charles Tucker (Liberal Democrat): 461 (13.0%)
- Mark Adams (Green Party): 418 (11.8%)
- Sean Shannon (Labour): 248 (7.0%)

The results for all wards in the county can be viewed at http://gis.worcestershire. gov.uk /website /Elections/results.aspx.

4. Waste and Recycling Survey, closing date Sunday 16th May

Are you an expert recycler or do you struggle to tell your cardboard from your Tetra Pak? Either way Wychavon District Council wants to hear from you. The council is conducting a review of its waste and recycling service and needs your views to help improve its service to you.

The short survey will take just a few minutes to complete, and your responses will influence how Wychavon communicates with you about waste and recycling in the future.

The survey can be found at https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/XT2YYB/. The survey closes this Sunday, 16th May.

5. Age UK Dementia Action Week Webinars, Tuesday 18th May & Thursday 20th May

Age UK H&W is hosting two free webinars as part of Dementia Action Week to showcase the great support that is available throughout Worcestershire for people living with dementia.

The first webinar on Tuesday 18th May will feature an information and Q&A session about the Droitwich Spa Meeting Centre. Register at https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/join-age-uk-hw-to-learn-more-about-our-droitwich-spa-meeting-centre-tickets-152976662315.

The second webinar on Thursday 20th May will explain about the various dementia support services available in Worcestershire. Register at https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/learn-about-dementia-services-in-worcestershire-tickets-151942561291.

6. Vacancies on the Worcestershire Independent Remuneration Panel, closing date Thursday 10th June

Are you interested in how Local Government works and what Councillors are paid?

Wychavon District Council currently has a number of vacancies on the Independent Remuneration Panel for Worcestershire. The Panel recommends to each District Council in Worcestershire the level of allowances to be paid to Councillors and other non-elected people, such as co-opted members. The aim of the Panel is to ensure that the setting of such allowances is open to robust, independent, and local scrutiny. For more information, go to www.birlingham.org/docs/remuneration_panel.pdf. The closing date for applications is 5.00pm on Thursday 10th June.