Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 15 March 2023

In Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

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

In attendance:

3 villagers, Mr Sansome, Farm Manger and Clerk, June Hiden.

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by County Councillor Adrian Hardman and District Councillor Ron Davies. Apologies given by the Footpath Warden Bruce Hayward, Lengthsman Carl Brassington and Tree Warden Rupert Day.

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.

Councillor Aston declared an interest in their planning application.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023, a copy of which has been circulated to all Councillors, was amended. Item 6 (f) was written as £15 and changed to £17.50 and this is further stated in Financial Matters Item 6 (f) in this meeting for clarity. The minutes were agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

Democratic Opening

The meeting was adjourned for public question time.

Villagers present gave their views on the Broadgrove site (Eckington Road) planning application. Concerns were raised on the major issues but also on minor points such as a 'gap' on the overall site area, refuse area near to residential properties, a deed of easement, speed and queuing on the highway, parking.

Written comments from other residents had been received and these were also considered by members. A lengthy discussion took place with points of concern being:-

- The access and egress onto the site.
- The proximity of the blind bend.
- The increase in traffic.
- Type of the business for the units.
- Visitors during trading hours and the restriction of trading.
- Design and ecology.

Residents were assured that their views would be taken into account and the Parish Council would compile sensible comments in their consultation when drafting the formal response to Wychavon District Council.

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden:

i. Footpath 506 – a walkway has been marked out across the asparagus field.

The Chairman stated that this is the footpath that runs behind the Old Rectory and then across the asparagus field parallel to New Barn Road. There is an alternative permissive path has been provided that runs around the edge of the asparagus field but the Parish Council are grateful to Revills at Woodfield Farm for ensuring the official path across the field is walkable following feedback from villagers and instruction from Worcestershire Countryside Services.

b) Tree Warden: an advert for a Warden had been published in the Birlingham News and the Chairman reported that the Council were pleased to report that Rupert Day has agreed to fulfil the volunteering role for the next twelve months.

c) Lengthsman – see ***Appendix 1***

d) District Councillor: none.

Statement by Councillor Ron Davies:-

"*It has been my privilege to serve as your District Councillor for the past 16 years. I am sorry that my health is not good enough for another 4 years. Kind regards to everyone*."

e) County Councillor:

i. I have to put the order in for 30mph roundels to be redone and the cross drain at the top. We need to stop gritting before they get done.

ii. Thanks for the advice regarding the poplars at Swans Neck. Clearly a slight failure in communication. (Adrian Hardman had seen the Eckington noticeboard on Facebook. The Chairman had corresponded with Adrian).

f) Clerk - See ***Appendix 2***

5. Planning

a) Planning applications pending: -

i. W/23/00042/FUL – Broadgrove Nursery Farm Shop, Eckington Road WR10 3DA

Commercial redevelopment of nursery site with 7 no. units

Applicant – Mr T Mence

ii. W22/02657/HP - Hills Cottage, Upper End WR10 3AA

First floor extension over existing carport. The enclosure of carport bay at ground floor level to create entrance hall and construction of zinc standing seam roof to link house to carport. Addition of PV solar panels.

Applicant - Mr Nicholas Aston

Parish Council comments:

"The majority of the parish council do not support the planning application as it has been submitted. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

The mass and the height of the proposed additional building, and in particular the height of the ridge line, detracts in a material way from the central part of the house that was so beautifully restored, with great care and attention. We feel it would diminish and detrimentally dominate the character of the listed building. The proposed addition mass and additional height is overlooked by the adjoining neighbours.

The proposed new ridge line over the garage is also nearly as high as the central part of the house/cottage. We feel it changes in a detrimental way the balance and the aesthetics of the listed building.

The front elevational treatment is a little brutalist compared to the sensitive way the central element of the cottage has been sympathetically restored.

The proposal conflicts with the Adopted Village Design Statement with regard to the proposed alternation of the shape and nature of the property and associated garage block.

However, as an observation only, the Parish Council would be minded to support an application with:

A lower height ridge line, with a less imposing mass, and use of materials in keeping with the main central part of the cottage.

The filling in and use of part of the ground floor area in the garage to be used for domestic use.

The use of the first-floor area over the existing garage as a domestic use, but with the existing ridge line height of the existing garage being adopted as the maximum height.

The use of solar panels on the rear of the properties roofing (so that it cannot be seen from the road or the immediately adjoining property)".

iii. W/22/02656/LB (Associated Ref: W/22/02657/HP) – Hills Cottage

First Floor extension over existing carport. The enclosure of carport bay at ground floor level to create entrance hall and construction of zinc standing seam roof to link house to carport. Addition PV solar panels

As with the Planning application the Parish Council comments are the same.

b) Applications granted:

i. W/22/02342/LB (Associated Ref: W/22/02341/HP) - The Manor House, Lower End WR10 3AD

Construction of a single storey orangery infill extension

Applicant - Mr Steven Byrne

ii W/22/02341/HP - Associated Ref: W/22/02342/LB – The Manor House

Construction of a single storey orangery infill extension

The Parish Council comments:

"The Parish Council has no objection in principle to this application.
However, in Birlingham's Village Design Statement which was adopted as a Local Information Source by Wychavon Council's Executive Board in February 2018, it is stated under Guidelines for Development that 'Alterations to existing buildings should respect the original design or improve its contribution to the character of the parish'. We therefore understand that the planning officer will wish to consider the impact of the proposed orangery on the wider appearance of the listed 18th century property with later 19th and 21st century extensions."

Approved 30 January 2023 for both listed building consent and planning permission.

iii. W/01882/FUL - Lower End Farm, Berwick Lane WR10 3AD

Demolition of garage (with planning approval) and construction of replacement visitor accommodation as alternative.

Applicant – Mr and Mrs Keys

Parish Council comments:

"*The Parish Council view is that they have a responsibility to support local enterprises which often need to diversify to continue to be viable, subject to there being no or acceptable levels of impact to local amenity and environment. We see that the proposal and its stated use for visitors for the training facility would aid this enterprise considerably. So, the Parish council do not object to the proposal, provided the appointed planning office attaches appropriate conditions to the consent.*

The Parish Council would like the planning officer to consider imposing a condition that the development approved shall only be used as ancillary to the dwellinghouse known as Lower End Farm. (Possibly with the reason to define the permission in the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, or indeed our policy reference)

Alternatively, as the existing predominant use appears to be that of a farm/landscaping, impose an agricultural tie on the proposed development."

APPROVED – 9 February 2023

c) Enforcement: -

Referred to local authority for guidance following resident's comments:

Rose Cottage – garden room extension
Birlingham Nurseries – erection of agricultural building

d) Tree application for works to Plane tree – W/23/00206/TPOA

Tree Preservation Order

Birlingham Village Green

Works consist of: Undertake tree works, as detailed on detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.

Proposed tree works at: Birlingham Village Green

Part II - PARTICULARS OF DECISION

Wychavon District Council hereby give notice that in pursuance of their powers under the above mentioned Act and Regulations PERMISSION HAS BEEN **REFUSED** to the carrying out of the works specified in your application received on 31 January 2023 for the following reasons: -

Reasons(s)

1. Insufficient justification has been provided for the proposed works

2. No justification has been provided for the restriction of the tree's size. The site has adequate space to allow the development of the tree to its full potential. The proposed works would be to the detriment of the future public amenity value of the tree.

3. The proposed works would be to the detriment of the natural shape, form and flow of the tree's canopy, and therefore to public amenity.

4. Unnecessary tree works should be avoided to minimise the chances of the ingress of harmful pathogens and decay, or the activation of latent pathogens or decay fungi.

5. The tree is a prominent feature within Birlingham. There are very few trees of similar size or stature within the immediate locale. The tree, being prominent in the street scene, visible within both public and private views, including from some distance away, is of value in terms of public amenity. Its reduction would be to the detriment of the street scene.

6. At the time of my site visit, no defects were seen within the crown that would justify the proposed works. It was evident that the tree has already been cable braced in the lower and upper crown, at least two places, to mitigate risk of crown failure. Provided these braces are regularly inspected, they should provide adequate risk mitigation.

7. The proposed branch removals are likely to lead to xylem dysfunction i.e. disruption of the tree' vascular system, resulting in increased hydraulic stress. The works are therefore considered unacceptable.

REFUSED 21 FEBRUARY 2023

Letter sent to Wychavon District Council by Clerk on behalf of Chairman and Parish Council.

For the attention of Nick McGowan

"Re Application W/23/00206/TPO:

Please note this is an open letter and will be retained on the records of Birlingham Parish Council.

Birlingham Parish Council do not own the specimen tree which was the subject of this application or the Village Green on which it sits. However as a responsible Parish Council we submitted the application in response to comments by members of the Birlingham community who were concerned that the lower branches of the tree needed lifting for Health and Safety reasons, not least because of the public bus

service, high level farm vehicles and of course pedestrians. At the same time our tree surgeon also recommended a reduction in the overall height of the canopy due to the close proximity of residential properties.

We have read your detailed reasons as to why the tree surgeon's suggested works be refused and appreciate the comprehensive nature of your justification for the refusal, which of course is on public record. We note that in your expert opinion, following your onsite inspection, that you saw no defects with the tree, and therefore no works were required or justified.

As a Parish Council, we will now rely on your expert observations and keep a record of them in our files."

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2022/2023

i) Bank balances - current is £8,546.13 22 February 2023 and Business saving balance is £8,302.66 as at 9 February 2023.

ii) Receipts

i. £250.00 – Birlingham Jubilee – phone box
ii. £250.00 – Bystander – phone box
iii. £105.00 – Worcestershire County Council – Lengthsman September 2022
iv. £135.00 – Worcestershire County Council – Lengthsman November 2022
v. £120.00 – Worcestershire County Council – Lengthsman December 2022
vi. £67.50 – Worcestershire County Council – Lengthsman January 2023.

iii) Payments agreed: –

i. £105.00 – Lengthsman September 2022 (675)
ii. £135.00 – Lengthsman November 2022 (682)
iii. £120.00 – Lengthsman December 2022 (684)

Payment due to Rupert Keys for gravel around the bench – previously discussed as necessary groundworks estimated at £60.00. Awaiting invoice.

Clarification and correction on previous minutes stating that there was an extra charge for delivery on the return of the kiosk of £125.00. The charge was for the fixing of the back and support at £150.00.
Original quote was £3,550. £150 was included in the final invoice of £2,515.00 dated 30 August 2022 and paid September 2022.

Pick up and return box	£1,300) £3550
Fully renovate	£2,250)
Fixing back and support	£150) extra
Deposit (invoice 102422)	£1,185 paid April 2022
County Councillors Funding	*£1775*
Jubilee Committee Funding	*£250*
Bystander Funding	*£250*

b) Future payments for consideration

i. £67.50 – Lengthsman January 2023 (689)
ii. £97.50 – Lengthsman February 2023 (690)
iii. £250.00 – Ian Morphett annual charge for maintenance of the Millennium Bench
iv. £40.00 – ICO Annual renewal charge (687) an acknowledgement has been received
v. £1,107.17 – Litter bins x 3 contract and emptying charges (686)

vi. £20.00 – Birlingham Village Hall hire
vii. £620.00 – Clerk's salary (July, August, September)
viii. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses (July, August, September)
ix. £620.00 – Clerk's salary (January, February, March)
x. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses (January, February, March)
xi. £179.85 – Refreshments for social evening – see Item 10 (688)
xii. £250.00 – Cuppa & Chat – see Item 12

c) Projects funds – to be summarised by Financial Officer and Clerk.

d) Precept acknowledgement.
Following agreement in November on budget (summary circulated to all Councillors), an application has been completed as £6,625.00 precept, including grant of £179.00 (due by 27 January 2023). Calculations have been received from Wychavon District Council.

e) Insurance – Clerk has chased the Insurance Broker again regarding the asset cover and has now been informed that the current policy for assets over £10,000 would not be covered. A bespoke policy to cover the bench and kiosk is being calculated by the underwriters.

f) Lengthsman's Scheme agreement for 2023 – 2024 has not yet been received. The minutes of the last meeting were corrected as the amount per hour was stated as £15. This was clarified and agreed as £17.50 to commence in April. The Lengthsman does not charge for fuel as other villagers are charged £20.00 per hour.

7. Millennium Bench and Groundworks

The Millennium bench was installed on 17 February 2023. Council members thanked Maxine Cook for all her efforts on this project. Some final work needs to be completed with gravel spread around the base of the bench and brackets to screw the base.

Carpenter Ian who had restored the bench had sent a cost agreement and it was approved that he will be contracted to maintain it annually to ensure that the correct preservative is used. Item 6 above.

8. Telephone Kiosk

Councillor Cook gave her report to say the kiosk was finally restored and back in situ. A discussion took place regarding a lock. It was agreed that the kiosk should be locked and that Councillor Cook would get costings and a lock from the restoration company. The Jubilee Committee are proposing to put cut outs in the box for the Coronation celebrations.

Very positive comments have been received from villagers.

9. Litter Bins

The cost agreement and contract for the litter bins was given a final agreement and the invoice paid.

10. Newcomers' Social

A successful newcomers' drinks party was held on 5 March 2023 to welcome the 16 new households that have moved into the village over the last two years. The Luffs were thanked for hosting the event and a payment for refreshments was agreed.

11. Kings Coronation

The King's Coronation is being led by the Jubilee Committee. Councillor Luff agreed to represent the Parish Council. There is a £200 fund available from Wychavon District Council to provide events and activities for the Coronation and the application form has been sent to Steve Morris to complete.

12. Cuppa & Chat

A grant has been received from County Councillor Hardman to provide funding for Cuppa & Chat to celebrate the King's Coronation. A cheque for £250 (690) will be given to Sue Hermon on behalf of Cuppa & Chat. She has emailed County Councillor Hardman to thank him for his generous grant and support.

13. Communication with farm

Communication between Woodfield Farm and Council members has been established. This followed previous discussions that had the objective of improving communication between the farm and the village (and vice versa) to ensure that all parties are kept informed of planned activities. This has been reported in Birlingham News. Councillors were pleased that a representative from Woodfield Farm was able to attend the Parish Council meeting. It was helpful to be able to share views on several of the items on the agenda and it is hoped that attendance by the Farm will continue from time to time.

14. Swan's Neck

The Clerk has circulated communications from residents regarding the cutting down of the trees at Swan's Neck. Councillor's asked why the pumping sheds remained and were informed that one is operational and the other is still has an electricity supply.

15. Roads and Flooding

Berwick Lane – still ongoing.

Lower End, near Manor paddock – appears to be flooding again although Severn Trent Water have visited the site.

16. Full Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premise – FTTP)

The Chairman gave an update on full fibre broadband. The Parish Council has recently received an update from Airband who have advised that the start date for installation of the fibre infrastructure in Birlingham is still on schedule to start in July 2023.

17. Elections of Parish and District

Members of the Parish Council are elected every four years. The next election will take place on 4 May 2023. Nomination Papers have to be submitted by hand not later than 4.00pm on Tuesday 4 April 2023. Notices have been put on the village board and on the website as the deadline for publishing was 13 March 2023.

18. St James' Church

To mark the Coronation, the new church tower floodlighting will be turned on officially at 9.00pm on Coronation Sunday 7 May. The work has been paid for by the Friends of St James', who will organise a short celebration to which the whole village will be invited.

Peter Luff is leading the project and a villager's consultation on the lighting will be updated in Birlingham News.

19. Speed Advisories

As reported, County Councillor Adrian Hardman has agreed to repaint the roundels once the weather improves. Councillors asked about the white hazards/narrowing marking which was previously mentioned.

20. Annual Parish Meeting in May

The Annual Parish meeting is agreed as Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 7pm.

21. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

There was nothing further to report.

22. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting

With nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 8.45pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 7.30pm.

The meeting will be held in Birlingham Village Hall. Clerk to book hall.

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

Date: ……..……..……..……

Appendix 1 – Lengthsman's Report

UPPER END
Reference 13210 – 24 January
Gully full above Parson's Pleck
Reply: 24 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to jet the gully.*"

Reference 15237 – 20 February
Gully full
Reply: 24 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to jet the gully. "*

Reference 16193 – 7 March
Gully full
Reply: 8 March - *Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to jet the gully. We will continue to monitor the drainage system as part of our routine inspection regime.*

Reference 16195, 16197, 16200 – 7 March

RECTORY LANE
Reference 14408 – 24 February Reply: *Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to jet the gully.*

POTHOLES
UPPER END
Reference 13211 – 21 January - by Court House
Reply: 24 February – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to repair/make safe.*"
Reference 13212

Reply: 24 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to repair/make safe*."

Reference 16198 – 7 March
Reference 16199 – 7 March
Reference 16202 – 7 March

CHURCH STREET

Repeater Sign
Reference 10945 – 1 February

WHITEHALL LANE
Reference 14407 – 9 February
Reply: 24th February 2023. *Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to repair/make safe. The area will continue to be monitored on our routine inspection regime.*

LOWER END

POTHOLES
Reference 10943
Lane by Clock House
1 February – Reply: *Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and upon inspection, no safety defect was found which meets our intervention levels. The area will continue to be monitored on our routine inspection regime.*

Appendix 2 – Clerk's Report

Highway Issues

UPPER END – POTHOLES below Parsons Pleck

Reference 13994

Reply: 24 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to repair/make safe*."

WHITEHALL LANE - DRAIN

Reference 14003 – 3 February

Reply: 24 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry. Worcestershire County Council would like to advise that the site has been inspected and a works order has been raised to repair/make safe. The area will continue to be monitored on our routine inspection regime*."

ECKINGTON ROAD - Overhanging tree(s) adjacent to Diary Cottage

Reference 10680

Reply: 7 February 2023 – "*Thank you for your enquiry, this location was inspected today. No safety issues were found, the tree is leaning against another tree but not in the direction of the carriageway. No vehicle debris was found, rubbish on the verge is the responsibility the your local District Council."*

Response by Clerk to WCC – not in agreement and request further visit.

Clerk has been consulting with nearby property owner.

THE AVENUE - Tipping

Resident: *There's a small area of fly tipping occurred on the side of the road by the fields off Broadway over the weekend, I have reported it to Wychavon DC and they are going to send someone out to collect it.*

Metal Detecting

Clerk has had various communications with a resident regarding metal detecting. The farm has said that firstly they don't allow any metal detecting on the farm due to the vegetable crops which grow therefore restricting access to fields. Secondly, that land that isn't in vegetable or cereal cropping is under a Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier Environmental Scheme (including all of the meadows).

Extracts of interest

Birlingham **News 295 – 25 January**

Bulb Teas start the weekend after next and the Bulb Sunday Service is on 5th February. Full details of all these events below.

The online edition of this email, which contains additional information about reporting email 'phishing', is available at www.birlingham.org/village/bno.

In this issue:

1. Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 1st February
2. St James' Church Services – February
3. Snowdrop Teas 2023
4. Coronation of King Charles III, Saturday 6th May – Monday 8th May
5. Parish Council Report

4. Coronation of King Charles III, Saturday 6th May – Monday 8th May

Steve Morris writes:

The Coronation of King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6th May, with other events on the Sunday and bank holiday Monday. The Jubilee Committee will call an open meeting in mid-February so that the village can decide how to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Meanwhile, the Jubilee mugs are now being distributed, along with details of how to get a refund. If you have ordered one or more mugs and not received them by next Wednesday, 1st February, please contact us at news@birlingham.org.

5. Parish Council Report

Ian Yates writes:

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting at 7.00pm on Wednesday 18th January in the Village Hall. A summary of agenda items follows:

Wychavon Planning Department The Parish Council has been concerned about recent delays to planning decisions. One planning application submitted in August 2022 is still waiting a decision. We are told that the delays are due to a lack of staff in Wychavon's Planning Department and the loss of its Head of Planning. District Councillor Ron Davies reported that a new Head of Planning at Wychavon has just been recruited.

2023/24 Parish Precept As a consequence of a reduction in amounts planned for projects, the Parish Council have been able to reduce the precept from £7235 (in 2022/23) to £6625 (in 2023/24), a saving of £610. This will reduce the amount payable for a Band D property from £41.47 to £38.66.

Newcomers' Drinks Party 16 new households have moved into the village over the last two years. This is an unusually high number. Some have already become integrated into village life while, for others, COVID lockdowns have made it difficult. So the Parish Council has decided to invite these new arrivals to an informal drinks party in March as a way of welcoming them to the village.

Litter bins Three new litter bins have now been installed around the village. It is hoped that these will help alleviate the problem of poo bags being left on the side of roads and footpaths while also encouraging people not to drop general litter in the village. The bins will be regularly emptied by Wychavon contractors.

Drains and flooding The recent heavy rain has shown that there are still issues with some of the drains in the village. This has led to flooding by the Manor House and at Upper End, and the Parish Council Clerk is working with Severn Trent and Highways to address the problem.

Roundels As soon as the weather improves the four sets of 30mph roundels will be repainted, as they have been damaged by flooding and road repairs.

Telephone kiosk Some of you may have noticed that a new concrete base for the telephone box has been constructed opposite the Village Hall. This work, which was carried out by a local builder, was delayed due to the very cold weather before Christmas, which would have prevented the concrete from setting. We are now waiting for the contractor to confirm a date for the return and installation of the restored box.

Tree Warden We are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of village Tree Warden as our current Tree Warden is unable to continue due to work commitments. An advert giving more details has recently been published in Birlingham News and the Parish Council would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in helping. The role is not onerous. Please contact our clerk June Hiden at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk and she can provide more information.

Full Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premise – FTTP) The Parish Council has recently received an update from Airband, who have advised us that the start date for installation of the fibre infrastructure in Birlingham has been delayed until July 2023. Although disappointing, the revised schedule still means that Birlingham will get full fibre years ahead of an installation under the government's general roll-out. This should mean that by the end of the year residents will then benefit by having a choice between a full fibre service from Airband or remaining with their current 'fibre to the cabinet' provider.

Millennium Bench The base for the bench has been constructed around the time capsule on the village green. As soon as the weather improves, the bench will be installed by the carpenter who has been restoring it.

Birlingham **News 296 – 8 February**

This edition contains information on Rowan Williams' Great British Bake-off talk at the IW, an opportunity to be involved in a star-counting project and details of the first Coronation open meeting.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham News Online
2. Birlingham IW, Thursday 16th February
3. St James' Church Opening, February
4. CPRE's Star Count 2023, 17th-24th February
5. Coronation Celebrations Open Meeting, Monday 27th February
6. Jubilee Mugs
7. Bystander Archives on the Village Website
8. Planning Applications

8. Planning Applications

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

The Manor House, Lower End: Construction of a single storey orangery infill extension (Planning Application Case No. W/22/02341/HP; Listed Building Consent Case No. W/22/02342/LB). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

Birlingham **News 297 – 22 February**

This weekend is the last for Snowdrop Teas – and there is an opportunity for you to snap up some snowdrop bargains for your gardens.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham News Online
2. Potted Snowdrops Closing Sale, Sunday 26th February
3. Coronation Celebrations Open Meeting, Monday 27th February
4. Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 1st March
5. St James' Church Services – March
6. Communications Between Woodfield Farm and Birlingham Village
7. Jubilee Committee – New Members
8. CPRE's Star Count 2023, 17th-24th February
9. Planning Applications

6. Communications Between Woodfield Farm and Birlingham Village

Ian Yates writes:

As a result of resident comment and some opposition to the recent tree felling carried out by Revills at Swan's Neck, Councillor Julia Luff and I met with Michael Porter and John Sansome of Revill/Redstar this week. As chairman of the Parish Council I had received a number of suggestions from villagers as to what action should be taken. I established that all permissions for the tree felling were in place but realised that the lack of communication between Revill/Red Star and the village (and vice versa) can sometimes be responsible for creating a false perception of why something is being done. This has led to a deterioration of goodwill between the village and the farm, which is unhelpful in resolving issues. Therefore the objective of the meeting was to agree how, through better communication, we could ensure we are kept informed of planned activities that might affect residents, so giving us an opportunity to provide feedback. This will hopefully avoid surprises and ensure that information is available. It will also provide a way in which any concerns villagers have can be escalated and resolved quickly. We discussed some current issues as examples.

In summary it was a very constructive meeting and we agreed that the Parish Council (specifically myself and Julia) will act as the interface between you (the residents) and Revill/Red Star on any issues you may be concerned about. This of course does not guarantee that all issues will be resolved in favour of residents but through an open dialogue we have an opportunity to find common ground which will allow the long established farm business and the village to co-exist with respect for each other. The farm have agreed to write an article for Birlingham News giving the background and their reasons for the work at Swan's Neck.

You can contact me or Julia Luff via the parish clerk at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk.

9. Planning Applications

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

Birlingham Village Green At (OS 9324 4309), Rectory Lane: Undertake tree works, as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information. (Case No. W/23/00206/TPOA). **Refused**. Full details and reasons for refusal can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

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

Lower End Farm, Berwick Lane: Demolition of garage (with planning approval) and construction of replacement visitor accommodation as alternative (Case No. W/22/01882/FUL). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

Birlingham **News 298 – 28 February**

This extra edition of Birlingham News includes two important pieces of information from Revills' farm.

In this issue:

1. Pig Slurry
2. New Planting in Jubilee Wood

Pig Slurry

John Sansome, Revills Farm Manager writes:

Within the next few days we will have a contractor spreading pig slurry on the wheat fields around Birlingham. This is a fantastic organic fertiliser and reduces our reliance on imported artificial nitrogen. Unfortunately it may smell unpleasant during the spreading and for a little while afterwards but this will be temporary.

New Planting in Jubilee Wood

John Sansome, Revills Farm Manager writes:

We have planted up Jubilee Wood this morning (Monday) with 100 plants including common alder, silver birch, crab apple, wild cherry, hazel and hawthorn.

All of the wood has now been collected from the field as well.

Photographs of the new planting will appear in next week's Birlingham News Online.

Birlingham **News 299 – 8 March**

This edition contains a number of items of local news, plus notices of the meetings for the Parish Council, the Coronation celebrations and the Friends of St James' Church AGM.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham News Online
2. Pat Taylor
3. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 15th March
4. Birlingham IW, Thursday 16th March
5. Coronation Celebrations Second Open Meeting, Monday 20th March
6. Friends of St James' Church AGM, Monday 27th March
7. Trial of Floodlighting at St James'
8. Birlingham Bystander Spring Edition
9. Snowdrop Teas
10. Police Incident on Saturday 4th March
11. Poplar Plantation at Swan's Neck
12. Travelling Music Box Bus
13. Bystander Archives on the Village Website
14. Planning Applications

3. Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 15th March

The next meeting of Birlingham Parish Council takes place on Wednesday 15th March at 7.00pm in Birlingham Village Hall. During the meeting there is an opportunity to express your views on local issues, so please go along.

7. Trial of Floodlighting at St James'

Peter Luff writes:

The Friends of St James' have funded and overseen the installation of replacement floodlighting at the church, and it is now in its trial phase. While the light produced is in keeping with the rural setting and gentle but effective, adjustments need to be made to reduce light-spill. However, we are already benefiting from the greatly improved efficiency of the single LED unit compared to the two old units it replaces and from the colour temperature of its light, which does not interfere with bat populations.

10. Police Incident on Saturday 4th March

Teresa Wilson, Red Star Growers, writes:

Statement of facts regarding the police incident on Saturday 4th March

As you will be aware, there was a large police presence at Woodfield on Saturday 4th March.

We thought the residents of the village would appreciate a factual summary of the events and these are below. Any other comments or suggestions are purely speculation as far as we are concerned. The police made it quite clear that information they gave to us would be extremely limited so we are only able to report on what happened at the time.

A lorry arrived in our yard late afternoon which contained produce we had bought from the continent.

As soon as the lorry parked, several marked police cars and vans surrounded the vehicle. The police then broke the security seals on the back of the container and on opening the doors, 10 people were found to be inside.

All the individuals were checked by the paramedics who also attended the incident and it appeared they were in relatively good health.

The police then escorted the individuals to the waiting police vehicles and they were all driven away. The police did not give us information as to where they were taking these people nor if they were under any sort of police caution.

The driver of the lorry was interviewed on site by a police officer but was free to leave as it was clear he was not involved.

The police made it quite clear to us they did not intend to discuss any of the events with us any further and that as far as they were concerned, this was the end of the matter.

11. Poplar Plantation at Swan's Neck

Michael Porter, Revills Farm, writes:

In response to the recent article written in the previous issue of Birlingham News, I would like to start by highlighting the history of the Swan's Neck poplar plantation.

Swan's Neck was planted with poplar trees in the late 1950s/early 60s along with another plantation next to Berwick Brook, near Nafford. Interestingly Eric Mitchell, who many of you will remember and lived at Field Cottage, was involved in planting them as part of a match making contract for Wilkinson

Match Company (previously Bryant & May). At the time landowners were encouraged to plant poplars for veneer peeled log production for the UK match making industries. An important inducement to farmers was the assurance that all acceptable veneer quality timber would be purchased. By the 1960s, private planting reached a peak of about 400ha annually, but by then the consumption of matches was in steady decline. Wilkinson Match Co therefore decided to reverse the earlier intention to rely on home-grown poplar for the supply of match veneer. By this time some 4044ha had been privately planted. With the loss of the one market for which nearly all planting had been intended, interest in poplars plummeted and many of these plantations are therefore left standing today.

These trees are considered a liability rather than an asset as they have little or no commercial value but continue to get bigger and more likely to fall or collapse causing considerable safety concerns. The landowners of both plantations took the decision to apply for a felling licence together approximately ten years ago. This was granted and a logging company started work felling the timber for pallet making. Unfortunately they stopped work before they got to Swan's Neck because the pallet maker ceased trading.

Recently a new market for biomass (used for renewable energy) opened and a new felling licence was applied for. As part of the application process a 28-day period must elapse during a public consultation process. Approval for 'clear felling' was given on 03/08/2022. John Cook Forestry Services carried out the necessary work felling and removing the trees very efficiently and safely. Replanting will take place in the winter 2023/24, as it is now a bit late to re-plant this year. Species will include common alder, oak, downy birch, bird cherry and small leaved lime.

The landowners of Swan's Neck take their responsibility for public safety and the protection of the environment very seriously indeed. Had an accident been caused by a falling branch or tree, the reactions of the residents of Birlingham would be completely different! I would also like to point out that the landowners have been responsible for establishing many hundreds of trees in and around Birlingham and creating very valuable conservation areas. This commitment will continue.

Following a very positive meeting between residents' representatives and the farm, in which more effective communications have been established, I am very hopeful that this sort of misunderstanding will be avoided.

The online edition of Birlingham News (www.birlingham.org/village/bno) contains details of the licence granted by the Forestry Commission and its associated consultation.

15. Planning Applications

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

Broadgrove Nursery Farm Shop, Eckington Road: Commercial redevelopment of nursery site with 7no. units (Case No. W/23/00042/FUL). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 27th March.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/23/00042/FUL.