Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 20 March 2024

In Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

Councillors Paula Aston, Katie Parsons and Ian Yates.

In attendance:

County Councillor Adrian Hardman, Tree Warden Rupert Day and Clerk June Hiden

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by Councillor Steven Byrne, away on business and delayed due to public transport, Michael Porter on business and David Glover abroad with work. The apologies were accepted. Apologies given by Footpath Warden Bruce Hayward and Lengthsman Carl Brassington.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024, a copy of which has been circulated to all Councillors, was agreed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

3. 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.

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.

Democratic Opening

The meeting was adjourned for public question time.

Road resurfacing in Upper End

A resident raised a concern that the verges along Upper End down to Red Star and the Church are continually being degraded through a mixture of farm and HGV traffic. The resident said:

> *"On Sunday 17 March, when the road repair work was being carried out (Upper End/the Avenue down to the church), a WCC representative who was on site with the repair team was asked how the edge of the verge vs the road could now be determined given the level of degradation and he said that "it was an in-exact science and they tried to go along a straight line; taking into account turns, etc." After the work was completed, it was clear that the repair work laid new tarmac into what was once verge, but which had been completely degraded. This means that not only are the previously existing village verges being taken out, replaced with tarmac, but if this continues, it is likely that bit-by-bit the verges are going to be further destroyed."*

County Councillor Adrian Hardman was asked if he could review this with Worcestershire County Council Highways so the line of the existing verges could be protected in future.

On the same matter, another resident had emailed the Parish Council to complain about being disturbed by the early Sunday morning start by the contractors doing the resurfacing. A question was raised as to who had requested the early start and whether this was of benefit to the majority of village residents. Discussions on this continue.

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden: none

b) Tree Warden:

Rupert Day gave the following report:

i. The dead trees around the church have now been removed.
ii. Sycamore on corner by cricket pitch. The landowner has agreed that the potentially dangerous limbs will be removed but due to the TPO the council is requesting additional photos before permission is given.
iii. Limes up the Hill on verge Sheep Field/Upper End. The landowner has agreed to get a tree surgeon to look at them. Also, need to clarify whether the TPO extends to these trees or not.

Further, Rupert said that the Community Together's Funding may give an opportunity to improve the Millennium Wood. Need to discuss with the Jubilee Committee.

Rupert Day was thanked for his assistance.

c) Lengthsman – see *Appendix 1*

Members asked to look at an example of the Lengthsman's worksheet.

d) District Councillor. The following report has been received:-

"Key issues from Wychavon

New Wychavon Strategy 2024-2028

This has been developed following an extensive and inclusive process involving an analysis of local needs, consultation with residents and engagement with councillors, managers and staff.

Proposed priorities and mini-vision statements are:-

PEOPLE

Providing opportunities for everyone, raising young people's aspirations and helping people to live healthier lives through:

- *Improving health and wellbeing*
- *Reducing inequalities*
- *Supporting young people*

PLACE

Helping everyone to access a good place to live, supporting businesses to thrive and creating vibrant and accessible places by:

• Delivering affordable homes and preventing homelessness
• Revitalising town centres
• Growing our local economy
• Encouraging low carbon travel

ENVIRONMENT

Boosting our natural environment, cutting carbon emissions and building resilience to climate change by:

• Enhancing our natural environment
• Responding to climate change
• Encouraging low carbon travel

2024/25 Budget & Money Plan to 2028/29

The budget for 2024/25 has been agreed at £12,852,000 which results in a Band D council tax increase of £5 resulting in Band D council tax being £125.08. This is the first rise in Wychavon's council tax for 6 years and reflects the challenges of increases costs and demands for services.

Second Homes Premium

Following the Royal assent of the Levelling up & Regeneration Bill, Councils are now allowed to levy additional Council Tax on houses designated as second homes. Second Homes currently pay the same in Council Tax as first homes, the Bill allows a levy of an additional 100% charge (So 200% in total).

The changes have to be made with twelve months' notice, so will not come in until the 2025/26 bills.

There are currently 455 second home properties in our district, charging a 100% premium on second homes would help provide financial support to future deficits This would generate increased income in our district of £949k. The District Councils share of this revenue is around 13% generating an additional annual revenue of £123k per annum.

Enhancements to Leisure Provision in Droitwich

This is a strategy to revamp and provide leisure facilities based in Droitwich but available to all Wychavon residents. The schemes being assessed are:

- *Refurbishment of the current centre*
- *Skateboard Park*
- *Athletics Track*
- *Pump Track*
- *Extension and enhancement of the Lido*
- *Droitwich Health Corridor*

This is a major set of proposals which will each require aa full financial and environmental analysis.

Biodiversity Action Plan

The council are to consult on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan during April to July 2024. This a comprehensive document and can be found on the council's website:

Biodiversity Action Plan Appendix 1.pdf (wychavon.gov.uk)
BA Plan_Table 3_Proposed Actions for Priority Species.pdf (wychavon.gov.uk)"

The District Councillor can be contacted on paul.middlebrough@wychavon.net

e) County Councillor: –

UPPER END

County Councillor Hardman was told of the concerns regarding the verges expanding due to the heavy vehicles travelling through Upper End and expansion. Councillor Hardman said he would meet with Barry Barnes of Highways to discuss the surface dressing programme.

The flooding at Maryworth Barn/Orchard House was noted. This has been made worse since the maintenance works and the grading of the road.

Members said it would be helpful if Highways could keep the Parish Council informed on the timings as well as the day/date.

AIRBAND

There was a discussion on Airband with the Chairman explaining that everyone had been on board with the proposals and then Airband had pulled out due to further funding. The Chairman's last communication had been with Fintan Kearns, Project Manager at Airband 4 to 5 weeks ago. The different sections of Airband don't appear to communicate with each other. An example of this had been the meeting in The Swan when the representatives there had no contacts and incorrect information. It seems that Lower End have no connectivity to the infrastructure. The Upper End needed infrastructure installed. Defford were experiencing the same 50/50 connections.

Media reports suggested that additional finance had been raised this week. Airband vehicles had been seen in the village again.

Councillor Adrian Hardman said he would contact Rob Stepniewski at County.

ECKINGTON BRIDGE

Eckington Bridge has already been shut for 56 days, excluding the road works. Climate change needs to be re-considered in mitigation policy and the raising of roads. Two projects that were cancelled were Pershore and Eckington bridges with the heightening of the approach roads.

The Parish Council and residents should raise their concerns with Harriett Baldwin, MP. Also, the SWDP proposes extra housing at Ashchurch and Throckmorton that potentially will use the roads.

Discussions have been underway regarding the environmental issues and the Bridge Trust ownership.

The SWDP is still waiting a traffic review and remodelling. The problems with Eckington bridge could highlight concerns.

Parish Council will draft a statement to Harriett Baldwin to improve the roads. Chairman will highlight this in the Birlingham News to residents.

County Councillor Hardman was thanked for his assistance and attendance.

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

5. Planning

a) Planning applications pending: -

i. W/23/02328/PIP - **Broadgrove Nursery Farm Shop**, Eckington Road WR10 3DA (30 November 2023)

Permission in Principle for the construction of up to 4no. dwellings

Applicant - Mr T Mence

Parish Council comments:

"Birlingham Parish Council support in principle the use of this site for 2 or 3 houses or indeed preferably bungalows, although 4 dwellings may be too many, considering the continued concerns about the site's access/egress proximity to the bend. We trust at the future detailed stage of application the allocated planning officer will ensure compliance in terms of design and materials with the Birlingham Village Plan."

PENDING

ii. W/23/02421/FUL – **Birlingham Nurseries**, Upper End, Birlingham, Pershore, WR10 3AA

(28 November 2023)

Construction of one secure storage unit and one covered storage unit ancillary to the use of the nursery

Applicant – Mr Smith

Parish Council comments:

"Birlingham Parish Council would not like to see a retrospective planning application becoming the normal, however, in this instance we see no objection to the new secure storage shelter. With regard to the "open fronted" building also proposed, it refers to this building replacing one that was storm damaged on the site. We would rely on the appointed planning officer to confirm this is the case and identify the previous storm damaged building and ensure this has been removed from the site as implied."

PENDING

b) Applications granted: -

i. W/23/01919/HP - **The Grange**, Berwick Lane WR10 3AD (7 November 2023)
(7 November 2023)

Proposed single storey orangery with roof terrace and single storey link

Applicant - Mr Adam Kent

Parish Council comments:

"Birlingham Parish Council recognise that the property is not currently listed, which we have always felt, since preparing the Birlingham Village Plan in 2017, was a little perplexing given the period and merits of the property. Perhaps you might consider referring the property to the relevant commission to consider independently the merits of the building being listed?

Given the current status of the property, we rely on the officer to stipulate appropriate materials and finishes are implemented given is location in a conservation area, and proximity to two listed buildings and their curtilage, namely the Cottage and The Manor House. We feel it is important for you to protect the front elevations impact onto the street/lane scape."

APPROVED – 12 MARCH

ii. W/23/02237/HP - **Brockham**, Upper End WR10 3AA
(21 November 2023)

Erection of single storey and two-storey extensions, and garage, with internal and external alterations, to include modified access

Applicant - Dr T Roe and Dr L Ansell

Parish Council comments:

"Birlingham PC has no objections to this application and will rely on the allocated planning officer to ensure appropriate materials, appropriate to the surrounding properties in the village, are conditioned in the formal decision."

APPROVED – 1 MARCH

iii. W/23/02477/HP - **The Russells,** Whitehall Lane WR10 3AB
(4 December 2023)

Window and door replacement, and installation of solar panels and battery

Applicant – Mr and Mrs Parsons

Parish Council comments:

"Birlingham Parish Council has no objections to this planning application."

APPROVED – 9 FEBRUARY

iv. W/23/02032/CLE - **Rose Cottage**, Church Street, WR10 3AQ
(1 January 2024)

Certificate of Lawfulness to demonstrate that an existing extension to caravan complies with definition of a mobile home under the Caravans Act 1968

Applicant - Mrs Jennifer Stanton & Mr Anthony Hawgood

Parish Council comments:

"*Birlingham Parish Council unanimously share grave concerns about firstly the log cabin itself, and its legal right to be there, and secondly the proposed extension to it. More specifically, in a fairly comprehensive note, which we appreciated, the planning officer, John Carlon, mentioned that a site visit was made by enforcement. However, we understand that the enforcement officer visited the wrong address and went to Damson Cottage by mistake. Can John Carlon, confirm from the case notes that an enforcement officer did actually carry out a further visit, and visit Rose Cottage? If not, as the Parish Council, we request that a visit to Rose Cottage is undertaken prior to any decisions being made. As part of that visit, we feel the following needs to be checked and then considered in the decision-making process of whether the log cabin meets the tests for permitted development, and as part of this, its full compliance with the Caravan Act 1960:*

View the facilities inside the log cabin. We understand from neighbours that it is self-contained and includes both a kitchen and bathroom fully plumbed into the mains. If accurate, this we feel calls into question whether the log cabin is dependent on the main house, or whether it is in fact an independent dwelling.

Consider and measure the other structures in the curtilage of the cottage, in order to check compliance with the 50% rule and also to check if it meets the minimum

distance required from the boundary for compliance with the Caravan Act i.e. 3 metres rule.

We trust that the officer will take into consideration that the property is in a conservation area, and the implications of such.

We trust John Carlon's own proposed site visit will determine if the cabin itself is legal and whether there was incorrect advice given at the pre app stage, or if it was technically correct, the positioning of the log cabin is noncompliant.

The Parish Council would also like to request a copy of the pre app email exchange with the applicant to understand the advice given by the Local Authorities planning department.

Once the log cabin's position is established following the above, we suggest there is then the question of the extension proposed, which, we believe requires planning consent. Please note that the producer of the log cabin, Keop's own guidance states that in their opinion if a balcony or veranda is added to the base log cabin then planning consent would be required. Following this logic, we as the Parish Council would assume planning would be required for the 5.0mx1.93m extension. There is then also the question of whether the extension to the log cabin, negates the log cabins compliance with the Caravan Act 1960.

As an observation, the applicant themselves refers to 'A small extension to the existing building,' strongly implying that they themselves consider the log cabin as a building not a caravan."

APPROVED – 5 FEBRUARY

b) Conflicts of Interest – policy

Councillor Katie Parsons has drafted a policy for Conflicts of Interest which had been circulated to all members. There were additional comments made on the draft. Chairman will send these to Councillor Parsons and any further comments are to be made before the next meeting. Councillor Parsons will simplify the draft as some points are repetitive of the Code of Conduct.

Agree at the May meeting.

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2023/2024

i) Bank balances - current is £9,491.17 as at 20 February 2024 and Business saving balance is £8,385.78 as at 9 February 2024.

ii) Receipts

i. £87.50 – Worcestershire County Council
ii. £140.00 – Worcestershire County Council

iii) Payments agreed: –

i. £650.00 – Clerk's Pay – July, August, September (720)
ii. £104.28 - Clerk's Expenses – July, August, September (721)
iii. £162.40 – PAYE – October, November, December (722)
iv. £87.50 – Lengthsman November 2023 (724)
v. £140.00 – Lengthsman December 2023 (725)

vi. £20.00 – Birlingham Village Hall – January 2024 meeting (726)
vii. £20.00 – Birlingham Village Hall – March 2024 meeting (736)
viii.£90.00 - Defibrillator pads as at Item 8 (729)
ix. £330.73 – Litter bin emptying and cleanse – Chairman's comments (731)

Discussion on the increase of the litter bin charges. Several communications have been made with Wychavon District Council regarding the rise in charges for its service for emptying and cleansing of the 3 bins. There was no transparency on the increase in costs and an explanation wasn't clear in explaining the reasons, particularly the 20% administration charge included in the invoice.

£70.00 – 2 x poppy wreaths previously agreed (723)

Cheque 732 void

b) Future payments for consideration

i. £40.00 – Information Commissioner Office Annual renewal charge
ii. £87.50 – Lengthsman January 2024
iii. £140.00 – Lengthsman February 2024
iv. £162.80 – PAYE January, February, March
v. £20.00 – Birlingham Village Hall – March 2024 meeting
vi. £650.00 – Clerk's Pay – October, November, December
vii. £104.28 - Clerk's Expenses – October, November, December
viii.£650.00 – Clerk's Pay – January, February, March
ix. £104.28 - Clerk's Expenses – January, February, March

Note: £250.00 – Ian Morphett annual charge for maintenance of the Millennium Bench as per March 2023. Clerk to ask Ian at Clarian if he is coming to do the maintenance works as he had advised?

c) Banking and Internet banking – Clerk has made enquires and is waiting for further information to come through from Lloyds bank.

There was further discussion on the bank accounts. There was currently £17,000 held in funds still with year-end to action. It was agreed that:

i. Possible account could be found to give more interest? Councillor Aston to action but aware of Parish Councils' restrictions.
ii. Alternative bank.
iii. It was agreed that up to £5,000 should be left in current account and the remainder to be transferred to the savings account. Clerk to action after year end.

The budget requirement for 2024 /2025 has been acknowledged by Wychavon District Council (31 January 2024) at £6,915 which includes £179.00 grant.

d) Lengthman's Scheme – 2024 / 2025 Annual Agreement. Nothing has been received at this time. It was noted the comments in the Clerk's report the 'dashboard' digital introduction and how this appears to duplicate the submission work of the Lengthsman and Clerk.

A question was asked by a Councillor about the defibrillator and an article regarding locations which indicated that Birlingham did not have a device. Councillor Parsons will contact Ken Fitch at Birlingham Village Hall to ask if the defibrillator is registered.

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

As reported previously, the government's stated ambition has been to roll out full fibre to the majority of the country although it was recognised that rural communities could be delayed by several years as they were less commercially attractive. The Parish Council's role has therefore been to secure the installation of a full fibre infrastructure for Birlingham (alongside the existing copper connections). Airband were already very active in Worcestershire and the Parish Council were able to work with Worcestershire County Council to add Birlingham to the infrastructure planned in Pershore, Bredon, Eckington and Defford. This gives residents choice - between full fibre or remaining with their existing copper service.

Since the last update in January, there has been a pause in the work to build the fibre infrastructure in both Birlingham and Defford. This was while Airband raised further funding from its investors and focussed resources on paid contracts rather than speculative work. According to news reports funding has now been secured and Airband has again been seen working in the village. There are 72 properties that can be connected to their service and the remainder of the infrastructure is expected to be completed later this year. If residents were thinking of signing up it's important that they make an informed decision by talking to other users, as recent customers have seen a deterioration in the service which appears to coincide with Airband's re-financing. As with all new infrastructure projects this may to be resolved with time, particularly as the infrastructure is opened to other ISP's, offering even further choice.

The previous discussion with Councillor Hardman will action talking to Worcestershire County Council and the Chairman will continue to investigate this using the contacts he has.

8. Communities Together Event for Parish and Town Councils

Further to the Communities Together Event held by Wychavon District Council, a meeting was arranged for village groups to meet with Branwen Bingle the Communities Officer from the local authority. The meeting took place in Birlingham Village Hall, courtesy of the Hall committee, on 29 February 2024. Representatives from the Village Hall Committee, Friends' of St James' church, Parochial Church Council, Jubilee Committee and the Parish Council attended. The purpose was to better understand funding opportunities that might be available for the different groups and the criteria and timing for any expression of interest.

Branwen Bingle was thanked for giving up her evening to attend the meeting.

Councillor Katie Parsons has agreed to co-ordinate interest on behalf of the groups and decide the next steps with Branwen. Councillor Parsons will set a proforma. Any actions will be circulated to all members.

9. Flooding at Lower End

Councillor Byrne sent an update and advised that a site meeting has taken place on 16 February 2024. Councillor Steven Bryne has chased Wychavon District Council who have asked Barry Barnes at Worcestershire County Council for his update.

The flooding has worsened.

There is nothing further at this time.

10. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

Councillor Paula Aston to draft an article for the Bystander about the Parish Council, its current members and co-option with reference to keeping a Council for the benefit of the village.

11. Date of Annual Parish Meeting held in May and date of next ordinary meeting.

A question has been asked if the May date of Wednesday 15 May for the meetings was agreeable. Councillor Katie Parsons was unable to attend however the Chairman, Councillor Ian Yates and Vice-chairwoman Councillor Paula Aston were available. It was agreed to go ahead with the advertised dates and times.

With nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 9.05pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next annual Parish meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 15 May 2024 at 7.00pm.

The annual Parish Council meeting will follow 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

Reports to Worcestershire County Council

Signage

Shorthill

15 March - Reference 47899 – 30mph repeater faded



LOWER END

Sewage pumping station

Something has crushed the fence at the Sewage pumping station in Grange Road.



Appendix 2 – Clerk's

Budget Requirement

31 January 2024

Acknowledgement from Wychavon District Council confirms the amended 2024-25 Budget Requirement for Birlingham Parish Council as £6,915 (precept £6,736 and grant £179). This will result in a Band D charge of £40.88 on the 2024-25 Council Tax Demand, **an increase of 5.7%** compared with the current year's charge.

Road Closures - Published in the Birlingham News

Upper End

Notice given on 14 March for - 1 day (Sunday) between **17 March** 2024 and 24 March 2024.

Redstar contacted Worcestershire County Council to liaise with the contractor on site due to them operating a 7-day a week business. Redstar have arranged with the hauliers to leave by 12 noon.

1 day between 12 April and 30 April 2024

Eckington Bridge

Closed from 23 March until 7 April 2024

Design Code Consultation – form has been submitted (February 2024)

Parish Lengthsman Dashboard - Live on 8th April 2024

New digitalised Scheme that will require the clerk to input all the data into a spreadsheet which records every activity completed by the Lengthsman.

Portrait of the King

Confirmation of order for His Majesty King Charles III Portrait – free of charge with government backing.

Circulations to Councillors

Communities Together Event – report by Councillor Parsons

Slides circulated, together with the bullet points below which were the main issues covered in my verbal report to the Parish Council.

The event was very well attended by Parish and Town Councils, as well as by Officers and Councillors of the South Worcestershire Councils. Below are the key points which may be of interest to the Parish Council:

- Youth Support Commissioning is now a District not County matter, so funding and decisions can be made more locally.
- Changes to the National Health Service mean that an Integrated Care Board which merges NHS and Social Care Services will be set up. There is then a Health and Wellbeing Board at County level, and District Collaboratives. This effectively means that voluntary and NHS

services will be partially merged, with a focus on preventative non-acute NHS services, at a local level.

- The Wychavon Communities Officers will now be geographically based and cover all matters. We are in the Central Area with our officer Branwen Bingle based in Pershore. We may wish to invite them to a Parish Council meeting to explain what support is available to us.

- Applications are open for Community Legacy Grants, the Wychavon Rural Fund and Neighbourhood Planning grants. Other funding sources also referred to and signposted on Council website. I understand that Councillor Glover will be looking into these opportunities further.

- Nominations are also being accepted for Wychavon Community Stars so we may wish to consider if we would like to nominate anyone.

- Housing Need Team – the team gave a presentation on Affordable Housing tenure types and rural lettings. They explained that they could help Parish Councils if they needed data on local housing need or to run a survey to inform a Neighbourhood Plan.

- Community Infrastructure Levey (CIL) and s106 monies update – Income from CIL across the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) area since 2017 has been lower than expected so has not been sufficient for the projects previously identified. The CIL rate and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which identifies the projects are being updated as part of the SWDP Review. Some governance arrangements are currently being put in place to oversee spending CIL and S106, which will include some pots that Parish Councils and community organisations can bid for as well as funding the main strategic projects. The Parish Council may wish to consider whether there are any projects we may wish to apply for.

- SWDP Review update – a dedicated Examination website has been set up at https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/swdpreview and the Inspectors Initial Questions have been uploaded to it. The Councils responses are currently awaited, and then the Inspectors can publish their Matters, Issues and Questions paper and programme in the hearing sessions. The hearings are likely to last a few weeks, which may be split into blocks. These will be in-person sessions in a Council-controlled property or properties in Worcester City Centre. They may also be streamed online potentially. The earliest that the SWDPR could be adopted realistically is December 2024.

- **Police and Crime Commissioners January Newsletter**

- **Invitation to The Chairman of Wychavon District Council's Civic Service**
  A formal invitation to from Councillor Robert Raphael, Chairman of Wychavon District Council, to his Civic Service at Pershore Abbey on Sunday 21.

- **Re-consultation – Worcestershire County Council's Revised Planning Validation Document**

- **Worcestershire County Council Town and Parish Councils Conference** – Invitation to attend - information market place to speak to officers and partners on a range of topics and a conference with presentations from a range of speakers including Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service and representatives from the council to cover such areas as highways and the digital switchover.

- **Notification of Consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule** -
  Draft Charging Schedule for Malvern Hills District Council, Worcester City Council and Wychavon District Council from 12 February 2024 to midday 25 March 2024.
  The levy is a charge which can be set by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. The CIL Draft Charging Schedule looks to amend the current levy charge for developments across south Worcestershire. The consultation runs until midday **25 March 2024.** There were no comments from members.

Extracts of interest All News can be found online at birlingham.org

Birlingham **News 322 – 24 January 2024**

Snowdrop Teas start a week on Saturday, with the Bulb Sunday Service the following day.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham News Online
2. Bulb Sunday Service, Sunday 4th February
3. Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 7th February
4. Snowdrop Teas 2024
5. Road Closure – Upper End
6. Village WhatsApp Group
7. Parish Council Report
8. Planning Applications

1. Birlingham News Online

As well as all the information included in this email, the online edition contains:

- A review of the Airband Full Fibre Service by David Glover
- A summary of last week's Parish Council meeting
- Details of the new Chief Constable for West Mercia Police
- Recent photos of the village and dates for your diary between now and mid-March

5. Road Closure – Upper End

Upper End, from the junction with Defford Road to the junction at Shorthill, will be closed for five days from 12th February. This is to allow for utility works by Airband (the provision of fibre broadband to the village).

6. Village WhatsApp Group

Jessica Dormer writes:

The village WhatsApp group is up-and-running and has already proved useful in tracking down a lost dog lead; letting people know whether Eckington Bridge is open; sharing information about repairs to a burst water main; and saving my own bacon (or should that be turkey) when I discovered - on Christmas Day – that I didn't have any tin-foil!

If you are already a member you should be able to add other people to the group yourself.

Otherwise, if you would like to join, please either email me at jessica@thedormers.net or send me a WhatsApp message on 07939 695113.

8. Planning Applications

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

- **Hills Cottage**, Upper End: 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 (Listed Building Consent Case No. W/22/02656/LB). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC

Birlingham **News 323 – 14 February2024**

This will be the last full edition of the Birlingham News email, as the new online edition is replacing it. You will still receive an email notification when the latest Birlingham News Online is available.

In this issue:

1. Birlingham News Online
2. Birlingham News – New Format
3. Birlingham IW, Thursday 15th February
4. Snowdrop Teas, Saturday 17th – Sunday 18th & Saturday 24th – Sunday 25th February
5. Road Closure Cancelled – Upper End (12-16 February)
6. Road Closure - Upper End, The Avenue and Church Lane (March/April)
7. Village Break-ins
8. Airband Update
9. Parish Matters Newsletter
10. Energy Saving Support
11. Bystander Archives on the Village Website
12. Planning Applications

2. Birlingham News – New Format

We are proposing to make changes to the way we deliver Birlingham News.

The first edition of Birlingham News was distributed twelve years ago, on 24th February 2012. At that time, it was decided to create an email containing just plain text so that it could be read on as wide a range of devices as possible. Since then, there have been huge improvements in technology and now almost every device is capable of accessing the internet and displaying pictures and graphics.

Two years ago, we began producing an online edition of Birlingham News, published at the same time as the email. This format has allowed us to include much larger articles than can be reasonably included in the email version, as well as providing the opportunity to publish photographs, adverts for events, and other features that are not suitable for the plain text of the email format.

However, producing two different versions of the same edition is time consuming and has become more so as the number of contributors has increased. We have therefore taken the decision to concentrate on the online edition in future. From the next issue in two weeks' time, we will still send out an email but this will simply list the articles in the online edition and provide a link to the PDF.

We will continue to send out urgent email Updates between editions as necessary (such as the request last week for help with the Snowdrop Teas and the news of the break-ins the week before).

Those without internet access will still receive hand-delivered copies of the PDF.

If, for any reason, you can receive the emails but are unable to access the PDF versions, please let us know. Either email us at news@birlingham.org or contact a member of the Birlingham News team (June Hiden, Ann Maxwell or Steve Morris).

We will continue to publish two editions a month, on the second and fourth Wednesdays, and we will aim to make Birlingham News available from around 6.00pm on the Wednesday evenings. Copy date is the Monday of that week.

Finally, thank you to all those who keep us supplied with articles and photographs, which help us to keep the village informed about what is happening in Birlingham.

5. Road Closure Cancelled – Upper End (12-16 February)

The road closure at Upper End, due to have taken place this week to allow for utility works by Airband, has been cancelled.

6. Road Closure - Upper End, The Avenue and Church Lane (March/April)

Upper End and the Avenue, from the junction with Defford Road to the junction with Whitehall Lane, and Church Lane, will be closed for one day between 17th and 24th March, and a further day between 12th and 30th April. This is to allow for pre surface dressing and carriageway surface dressing.

8. Airband Update

Ian Yates writes:

There is some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that 72 properties in Birlingham (around 50%) can now be connected to Airband's full fibre service. The list of those properties can be viewed at https://birlingham.org/docs/birlingham_connectable_properties_from_Airband_7-2-24.pdf.

In summary:

- Village centre (20)
- Broadway down to the Manor House and barns (10)
- Church Street (22)
- Eckington Road (17)
- Farm on Shorthill (3)

The bad news is that the following areas cannot be connected yet:

- Lower End from Peacock Barn on Broadway all along Broadway Road as far as October House where it meets Shorthill and also including Grange Road, Meadow Lane, Berwick Lane and Nafford
- Whitehall Lane except for Whitehall Cottages and White Posts
- Upper End from the junction with the A4104 to where it meets Shorthill.
- A4104 (Bakers Hill)

Unfortunately, this situation is unlikely to change in the short term.

The details of the information received from Airband are included in the full edition of this article in the online edition of this email at www.birlingham.org/village/bno.

9. Parish Matters Newsletter

The latest edition of Wychavon District Council's Parish matters newsletter includes:

- Wychavon Community Network Conference
- Free Energy Home Improvements now available to residents in Wychavon
- Wychavon Community Legacy Grants Expressions of Interest now open
- Homes for Ukraine update

12. Planning Applications

The following planning applications have been determined by Wychavon District Council:

- **Rose Cottage**, Church Street: Certificate of Lawfulness to demonstrate that an existing extension to caravan complies with definition of a mobile home under the Caravans Act 1968. (Case No. W/23/02032/CLE). **Certified.** Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.
- **The Russells**, Whitehall Lane: Window and door replacement, and installation of solar panels and battery (Case No. W/23/02477/HP). **Approved.** Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website.

Birlingham **News 323 update – 19 February2024**

Airband Meeting

Ian Yates writes:

The invitation below for this Thursday at the Swan is an opportunity for you to meet with Airband staff and ask questions and learn more about their full fibre service:

Come and chat to us about our fantastic broadband deals

We will be at the Swan Inn, Church Street, Birlingham on Thursday 22nd February 2024

airband.co.uk

Birlingham **News 324 – 28 February2024**

Birlingham News Online

The online edition contains:

- Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 6th March
- St James' Church News – Report of Bulb Sunday Service and services for March to June
- Notice of Eckington Bridge Closure, Saturday 23rd March – Sunday 7th April
- Article on fire crew rescue at Eckington Bridge
- Link to West Mercia PCC's latest newsletter from the Police & Crime Commissioner
- Recent photographs of the village and dates for your diary between now and mid-April

Birlingham **News 324 update – 13 March 2024**

The online edition contains:

- Details of tree works in the Avenue near Field Cottage, Wednesday 13th and Thursday 14th of March
- Parish Council meeting, Wednesday 20th March
- Notice of Closure for Upper End, part of the Avenue and Church Lane, for one day during Sunday 17th – Sunday 24th March
- Notice of Eckington Bridge Closure, Saturday 23rd March – Sunday 7th April
- Planning Applications – Brockham approval