Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 15 January 2025

In Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

Councillors Paula Aston (PA), Rupert Day (RD), Steven Byrne (SB), David Glover (DG), Katie Parsons (KP) and Ian Yates (IY).

In attendance:

County Councillor Adrian Hardman (AH), District Councillor Paul Middlebrough (PM), Clerk June Hiden (JH) and 2 residents

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by Councillor Michael Porter due to attending a surprise event. The apologies were accepted. Apologies from Footpath Warden Bruce Hayward and Lengthsman Carl Brassington.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest but councillors were reminded of the need to update their register.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024, 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.

20 is Plenty

Identifying the benefits of a speed restriction in Upper End and further into the village. Residents attending asked 'where are we with this matter?' and were happy for Rupert Day to update and report. All discussions summarised at Item 9.

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden: none.

b) Tree Warden, Rupert Day:

i. The village had no identified trees down which blocked public highways despite the storms of December and January;
ii. Spoke with the landowner and they have committed to addressing the 4 Lime trees (off the Avenue) which are a concern. However, we have to accept that they are busy and not sure of a date. Will ask them again if nothing is heard by the end of March.
iii. The landowner has still not come back to me on the status of the Sycamore bow between the church and the cricket ground, but this is more an issue of the potential damage to houses/walls if it did come down rather than any necessary indicators that it will (touch wood).

Some trees are covered in mistletoe and could be dangerous. This has been pointed out to the landowners.

c) Lengthsman, Carl Brassington – circulated to all Councillors. ***Appendix 1***

d) District Councillor. A report has been received from Paul Middlebrough. ***Appendix 2***

Government reorganisation letter, circulated to all Councillors. ***Appendix 3***

The leader of Wychavon District Council has written to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution expressing support for a one county unitary authority in Worcestershire.

Councillor Middlebrough asked members to think about how authorities will function. The District Council will have no life beyond 2028 but services will want to run until then. How can the services be kept going? What about the planning system? The SWDP will coincide with changes.

Members expressed their concerns. There has been a longstanding relationship with both County Councillor Adrian Hardman and District Councillor Paul Middlebrough but this could become remote and lost.

The District Councillor was thanked for his attendance and the comprehensive information.

Councillor Middlebrough can be contacted on paul.middlebrough@wychavon.net

e) County Councillor:

Councillor Adrian Hardman was involved in the discussion on '20 is Plenty' and 'Lower End Flooding' providing valuable input. He spoke about the governments proposed Reorganisation and how unsettling this is for staff. The 2 tier school changes, the SWDP, social care, all of these happening at the same time and then the government won't be local.

Councillor Hardman was thanked for his attendance and everyone was grateful for his assistance and help.

f) Clerk - See ***Appendix 4***

5. Planning

a) Planning applications – none

b) Applications determined: - none

c) Enforcement: - none

There has been no decision on the Tiddlesley Wood application.

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2024/2025

i) Bank balances - current is £8,763.12 as at end of December 2024 and Business saving balance is £13,488.19 as at end of December 2024.

It was noted that the current account is now called Commercial Instant Access Account and the saving account is called Treasurers Community Account.

ii) CIL statement – the statement for 2023 – 2024 has been returned to Wychavon District Council (18.12.24).

iii) The November meeting agreed that the CIL balance would be shown on the financial spreadsheet to allow easier monitoring as required. There have been no changes to the CIL amount in 2024 – 2025 to date.

iv) Receipts

i. £192.50 – Worcestershire County Council
ii. £157.50 – Worcestershire County Council

v) Payments agreed: –

i. £192.50 - Lengthsman September 2024 (cheque 755)
ii. £157.50 – Lengthsman October 2024 (bank transaction 25.11.24)
iii. £22.00 – Birlingham Village Hall – November meeting (bank transaction 25.11.24)
iv. £167.50 - Clerk's PAYE – July, August, September (cheque 753)
v. £670.00 - Clerk's pay – July, August, September (cheque 758)
vi. £104.28 - Clerk's expenses (cheque 759)
vii. £167.40 – Clerk's PAYE – October, November, December
viii. £670.00 – Clerk's pay – October, November, December
ix. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses October, November, December
x. £250.00 – Clarian for bench maintenance (bank transaction 18.11.24)
xi. £70.00 – Royal British Legion poppy wreaths (cheque 756)

Error on cheque 757 - void

b) Future payments for consideration

i. £87.50 – Lengthsman August 2024 (bank transaction 18.11.24)
ii. £43.75 – Lengthsman November 2024
iii. £175.00 - Lengthsman December 2024
iv. £338.62 – Litter bins annual charge

It was resolved that £5,000.00 should be transferred from the current account to the savings account.
Action JH

c) Budget setting:

Budget requirement was discussed in November 2024 as £7,125.00 (excludes grant of £179.00). (application due by 24 January 2025). This was subject to any further discussions at this meeting, before a final resolution. Calculations have now been received from Wychavon District Council and circulated.

Lengthsman's Costs:

Lengthsman (Worcestershire County Council set target) costs are funded directed and not from the precept.

Carl Brassington has been asked to confirm his rate for 2025/2026. The Lengthsman is increasing his hourly rate to £20.00. The Lengthsman scheme is allocated by Worcestershire County Council. This will have a slight impact on the amount of work the Lengthsman budgets for on parish highways.

All members in agreement with the budget.

d) Internet banking

The meeting agreed that we need to set up limits to the payment amounts individuals can authorise and then an online process that requires larger amounts to be countersigned by at least two councillors. It was also agreed to set up standing orders for Clerk's salary.
Action PA

7. Discuss actions from previous meeting

Community Project Funding (CIL) and Consultation on Community Infrastructure Projects

The Parish Council has funding available in its Provisions Budget and further funds can be accessed through Wychavon District Council's grant funding for community facilities and infrastructure from the Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that has been received. There are different criteria defined for how each of these various funds can be used but in general the monies can be spent on community infrastructure projects.

In the next couple of weeks, Councillor Katie Parsons will contact Birlingham community groups, circulating a proforma and explanation to invite them to put forward projects. The resulting list will then be consulted upon with the local community to establish parish priorities.
Action KP

Survey / Speed

'20 is plenty' - identifying the benefits of a 20mph limit in Residential Areas.

The working group tried to meet with Worcestershire County Council's Head of Highways, Paul Smith but this couldn't be arranged. The group wanted to discuss whether 20mph is feasible within current policy in certain parts of the village. The proposal was circulated to him instead and he advised he would share this with his expert. Copy of email regarding this being shared is to be found by Councillor Hardman and forwarded to Councillor Day. The opinion is awaited. County Councillor Hardman will continue to chase.
Action AH and RD

In the meantime, the following additional actions, were agreed:

- Rupert Day will contact Bewdley Town Council, who have just had their 20mph speed limit approved, to understand how they achieved this. The information gathered from Bewdley could provide valuable insights and strategies that might help in advancing the proposal for our village.

- Rupert Day will contact a transport consultant known to one of the residents in the working group who may be able to advise on policy and likelihood of success before a formal submission is made. Members agreed to provide funding for this from the Projects provision based on a formal request.

- The group will also consider making a Freedom of Information request to better understand the council's position on 20mph limits.

Action RD

Plan A will be pursued with Worcestershire County Council and the above additional actions. Councillor Katie Parsons will liaise with Wychavon District Council also through the CIL advisor. If this goes no further Plan B on costings for white lining and signage remains.
Action KP

Members agreed that villagers should also progress the matter directly. It was suggested that a template letter was produced to assist.
Action RD and SB

Highway Issues

Flooding at Lower End near Manor Paddock.

Councillor Steven Byrne gave an update on the leak on the slope by the Manor House. Following the repair of the collapsed drainage pipe in the road by Highways, Severn Trent Water (STW) need to inspect and then repair their collapsed surface water sewers to the north of Manor Stables, within the Moors land. This is still the main issue causing excess water to flow onto the public highway. However, to date, STW has not carried out the necessary inspection and repair and it was agreed at the last meeting that with Councillor Hardman's help this would be escalated to the Managing Director of Severn Trent, Liz Garfield. Councillor Hardman has progressed this and Liz Garfield has delegated the request to her regional organisation. The Parish Council are now waiting again for a response.
Action AH and SB

School Buses

Councillor Paula Aston has been contacting the bus company directly and communications have improved. A WhatsApp group has been set up on behalf of the residents.

8. Police – Parish Priorities

Clerk's report gives details from West Mercia Police. There are concerns regarding thefts. What are the trends at the moment?

There is a Safer Neighbourhood Team drop-in session. These are held regularly in local villages and are an opportunity to meet with the police team and discuss any concerns. Councillor David Glover will attend the next one local to Birlingham on behalf of the village. There may also be an opportunity to assist with 20 is Plenty.
Action DG

9. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

- Apologies from Rupert Day for the next meeting.

- Parish and Town Council event - 6 March 2025. This event will cover various topics including elections and best practice for dealing with vacancies, proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system and three workshops on Rural Transport, Neighbourhood Plans and Health and Wellbeing. Councillor Rupert Day will attend.

Action RD

10. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting - with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 8.40pm and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 7.00pm.

The meeting will be held in Birlingham Village Hall. Clerk has booked the hall.

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

Date: ……

Appendix 1 – Lengthsman's Report

Drainage / Flooding

6 January 2025

Flooding in Broadway was a result of the blocked/broken drain in this stretch which I seem to remember is on Highways investigation list.

Reported again on 10 January 2025 reference number 70645




Flooding by Court Cottages was due to debris being washed down the road and blocking the grids




Potholes

Near the **Court House**

9 January 2025 reported to Highways reference number 70517 What3Words - Items.glory.factored



Near Barncroft

9 January 2025 reported to Highways reference 70516 What3Words pimples.reset.caps



On the highways issues WCC have been active at Upper End clearing the gullies near Barncroft and Court Cottages. They also cleared the gullies at the junction of Upper End and A4104.

The dislodged access cover in Broadway Road has been reset.

Outstanding issues

Flooding at Court Cottages was caused by debris washing down and onto the gully blocking the inlet. Again, I raised the issue of street sweeping as most of this was leaf litter which collects in this area (as well as others in the centre of the village). I have had no joy previously contacting Wychavon contractors as I get a standard response that every village is on a schedule. I raised it with the local Councillor at a meeting a few months ago but I have not received any updates.

If Wychavon District Council have instructed the contractor to reduce or even cease street sweeping, then we should be informed. I clear this stretch quite regularly but autumn leaf fall is particularly bad. It could be argued by Worcestershire County Council that this is not part of the Lengthsman scheme as street clearing is a Wychavon issue.

Two large potholes have appeared in the Court Cottages stretch which I have highlighted and reported. One is severe and dangerous. (as picture shows)

Slow emptying of the gully at Maryworth Barn causing some flooding to the carriageway in heavy inundations.

Blocked or damaged pipe work in Broadway between Cart House and Birlingham House causing lifting of the access covers in heavy inundations. (as picture shows)

No issues at the junction of Shorthill and The Avenue recently.

The footway in Eckington Road was cleared during the summer which is a great improvement although the hedge is still overbearing and has not been trimmed yet. There were several gullies which were overgrown and silted up but I am not allowed to attend to these due to the speed limit restrictions.

Appendix 2 – District Councillor's Report

"Key issues for Birlingham Residents –

<u>English Devolution Bill</u>

The Government has now announced its plans for reorganising Local Government in shire county areas which still have the two-tier arrangements with district councils, into unitary authorities.

For Wychavon and Worcestershire this will result in both the county council and the six districts being abolished and metamorphosing into a unitary or more than one unitary authority providing the services currently run by both county and district councils.

The first part of the process is to defer the County Council elections in May 2025 if plans are ready.

The initial part of the process has been for the County Council to indicate its willingness to engage with the government. To this end the leader of the county council has written to the minister in a positive manner.

> *Dear Minister*
>
> *Further to your letter of the 16 December 2024 outlining the English Devolution White Paper and the Government's ambition, we write to inform you that Worcestershire County Council is keen to move at pace to deliver devolution and enable the county to achieve better efficiencies, economies of scale and improved outcomes for our residents and businesses. Therefore, with the pace of change in mind, we are writing to ask you to exercise your Ministerial powers to postpone the County Council elections, which are due to take place in May 2025. This will give us the time to work with partners and stakeholders to put together proposals for local government reform that are necessary to unlock devolution for Worcestershire.*

Wychavon like the other five districts in Worcestershire has not been a part of the conversation with government.

You will be glad to hear parish and town councils will not be overtly affected by the proposals and will become the second-tier bodies under the unitary authority.

In addition, there are requirements to prepare for Worcestershire to work to form a Mayoral model to deliver strategic services on a more regional basis. More of that to come.

<u>South Worcestershire Development Plan Review</u>

I am pleased to say that the planning team got all of the information to the Planning Inspectorate by the 31 December 2024. This means that the inspection can now begin in earnest.

P Lewis and E Worthington, chartered Town Planners have been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the soundness of the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.

The timetable is as follows:

<u>Hearing Week 1</u> - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY

Hearing Day 1. 9.30 am Tuesday 4 March
Matter 1 Procedural/legal requirements
Matter 2: Policy SWDPR 03 The Spatial Development Strategy
Matter 3 The Green Belt

Hearing Day 2. 9.30 am Wednesday 5 March
Matter 4: Provision for housing
Matter 5: Housing Land Supply
Matter 6: Housing, health and wellbeing and Implementation and Monitoring Policies

Hearing Week 2 - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY

Hearing Day 3. 9.30 am Tuesday 11 March
Matter 8: Economic Growth Strategy and Policies
Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations
SWDPR 54: Mitton

Hearing Day 4. 9.30 am Wednesday 12 March
Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations continued
SWDPR 51: Worcestershire Parkway
SWDPR 52: Land at Throckmorton New Settlement

Hearing Day 5. 9.30 am Thursday 13 March
Matter 9: Strategic Housing Allocations continued
(SWDPR 52: Land at Throckmorton New Settlement continued as necessary)
SWDPR 53: Rushwick Expanded Settlement

Friday 14 March
Reserve morning

Hearing Week 3 - To be held at the Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY

Hearing Day 6. 9.30 am Tuesday 25 March
Matter 10: Urban Extensions x4
Matter 12: Worcester City Allocations

Hearing Day 7. 9.30 am Wednesday 26 March
(Matter 12: Worcester City Allocations continued as necessary)
Matter 13: Malvern Hills Allocations
Matter 14: Wychavon Allocations"

Appendix 3 – Letter to Minister of State from Councillor Day, Leader of Wychavon District Council

Dear Minister

Devolution and Local Government Reform - The Case for a One Worcestershire Unitary

I am writing in support of the recent letter sent by Cllr Simon Geraghty, Leader of Worcestershire County Council advocating the formation of a One Worcestershire Unitary Authority. There are several benefits to this approach when compared with splitting Worcestershire into two or more unitary authorities.

Protecting the Wychavon District legacy and ongoing District services

Before I describe those benefits, I should point out that I write this letter with a heavy heart at the prospect of the closure of a well-run and much-respected Council. Wychavon has the third lowest Council Tax rate in England, out of 164 Districts, and enjoys high resident satisfaction levels with 71% of residents saying they are satisfied with how Wychavon runs services. We are rightly proud of our 50-year legacy and whilst we look forward to working with other Districts and the County to raise standards across Worcestershire, I am very concerned that merging District budgets with the statutory needs of the County will put much of our good work at risk. You will be aware of the significant pressure that adult and children's social care has put upon County Councils throughout England. The expansion in the cost of these services is unrelenting and because they are statutory services they will inevitably take precedence over other services provided by the new unitary authority. Up until this point District Councils have provided the protection of a separate legal entity for these services. In Worcestershire, the District Councils account for just 14% of local government spending yet they ensure good standards of parks (six Green Flag parks in Wychavon alone), health and well-being facilities, (well-being hubs and leisure centres in each of our three towns), and community building, where in Wychavon we have provided £4m to our local communities for locally driven initiatives. These activities help make life enjoyable and support the resilience of all our residents. They are a very public and visible sign of the delivery of both local and central government. They will however be at risk when placed in the same accounting budget as social care. The pressing statutory requirement will overcome these discretionary items. My request is simple; that in publishing the Devolution Bill you ensure there is a measure in place to protect these activities either through a ring-fenced budget or a guaranteed percentage of total spending so that they continue to account for the same proportion of costs going forward. Allied with this of course is the need to resolve the long-term funding of social care and whilst I was delighted to learn of the appointment of Baroness Louise Casey to drive change in this area, I was disappointed that she should be asked to perform yet another commission with a timeline stretching to 2028.

Benefits of a One Worcestershire Unitary Authority

Accepting these concerns, the ambitious timeline and the limits on the size of both unitary and Mayoral Combination Authorities set out in the White paper, there are in my view significant benefits to operating a One Worcestershire Unitary authority as opposed to anything smaller.

***Scale and reduced operating costs** - Worcestershire has a population of just over 600,000 and is an excellent match for the target of 500,000+ residents for newly formed unitary authorities referenced in the English Devolution White Paper. The Wychavon District has the second-highest growth rate in the West Midlands and includes the planned Worcester Parkway development. Over the past four years, we are proud to have built over one thousand affordable homes. The Council already operates a successful shared service agreement with neighbouring Malvern Hills District Council and the local development plan is shared with Malvern Hills and Worcester City. There is good cooperation between the Councils but a South Worcestershire-only unitary would be well below the scale the Government is requesting and would not achieve the savings outlined in the 2020 PwC report "Evaluating the importance of scale in proposals for local government reorganisation", referenced on p102 of the White Paper.*

Reduced costs of change *- by keeping the County footprint, the cost of change needed to split currently combined functions such as adult's and children's social care and highways will be eliminated. Future upgrades of processes and systems will also be lower for a single entity.*

Place Implications and Inward Investment – *a One Worcestershire Unitary means the benefits of strategic growth can be maximised and potentially attract more inward investment. A single, coherent voice for the area is better than competing North and South Worcestershire visions.*

Improved career opportunities for staff *- A single Worcestershire solution will over time offer more progression and future job opportunities for staff than two separate entities.*

Provides a stronger voice for the Mayoral Combined Authority than a two-Worcestershire solution *- Mayoral Combined Authorities are expected to have 1.5m+ residents. Worcestershire's population of 610,000 will have more impact than two authorities of half that size.*

Makes a 2027 transition date more likely, reducing uncertainty and flight risk of key staff *- splitting the County services will elongate the transition period making it harder to retain key staff.*

Simplicity and clarity of identity *– Worcestershire's identity is based on a thousand-year history, which when kept intact supports rather than diminishes the historic role of the City of Worcester. By comparison, a South and North Worcestershire solution would only add confusion for residents, businesses, and visitors. I trust that for the reasons outlined above, the benefits of a One Worcestershire Unitary Authority are clear and will gain the support of both you and your team. In the meantime, I look forward to working with my colleagues from the six Districts in Worcestershire and the County Council to outline the business case for such a change when we receive your letter later this month.*

Appendix 4 – Clerk's Report

i. Highways / Public Rights of Way

- **The Causeway**

Communications:

29 November 2024 from Mr Bemand of Defford to Defford Clerk and copied to Birlingham

I attach further evidence (if any more is needed) that the causeway requires restoring to its original length. This issue has now been in progress for over two years and the taxpayers' money spent so far on the part restoration of this causeway has been wasted. What is the latest? When will the causeway be fully restored?



Email from Phil Coulson, Public Rights of Way Operations Manager

"Hi Sue and June,

Feel free to contact me via 01905 843439 if you feel necessary."

- **Drainage**

UPPER END

3 December 2024 – Drainage report 67226 (acknowledged by WCC on 11 December 2024).
All the grids by The Old Dairy Upper End

Lengthsman also reported. Update on 11 December 2024 – Drainage report 66840 (27 November 2024)

"Spoke to the guys working in Upper End today. They have jetted from Barncroft to Parson's Pleck."

- **Potholes**

LOWER END

28 December 2024 - Pothole Report (Reference 69386) to Worcestershire County Council on the bend below the Manor House. WCC have acknowledged.

THE AVENUE

24 November 2024 - A resident sent the following email

Storm drain

"The storm drain has lifted again and was in a dangerous position. It is clear that there is a blockage - or probably roots- between Coach House and Field Cottage as the drain lower down is clear. When the lid lifts it is a serious injury risk for the many walkers, especially children who walk close by. Can you please remind the relevant authority of their responsibility, in particular pedestrians' safety. Your help will be appreciated.

Also, in Lengthsman's report.

BROADWAY ROAD

The road closure in Broadway Road appears to be for a new connection to the farm field.

Road closure notices were sent on the afternoons on the day(s) of the closures.

- **Bridge over Nafford Weir mistaken for footbridge at Comberton**

Clerk has contacted the Senior Area Public Rights of Way Officer regarding the bridge over Nafford Weir as social media said it was out of action.

Correction as it is an Eckington footpath between Great Comberton and the road past Nafford "It's a sleeper bridge that is in very poor condition with several holes and deterioration in other parts of the structure. I'm in discussions with the landowner to get a replacement in. I've put the legal notices up at either side and as an initial measure had taped off the bridge itself but I suspect walkers are continuing to use it. At their own risk now.

Circulations to Councillors

RSN Rural Funding Digest - December 2024 Edition

4 December 2024 - Monthly bulletin featuring RSN Rural Funding Digest & Government Consultations

Welcome to the monthly Funding Digest! Please share this publication with Colleagues, Parish Councils, Community Groups and anyone else that may be looking for funding as the Funding Digest includes many sources of grant funding that they may not be aware of.

The Government Consultation section may include a draft response to relevant rural consultations and also highlights other consultations relevant to rural areas which you may be interested in responding to.

Cotswold Lion Issue 52 - Cotswolds National Landscape

13 December 2024 - Online and in print around the Cotswolds

Issue 52 January - June 2025 We're delighted to let you know that the Cotswold Lion is back in print for Issue 52. The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens are supporting us by distributing within their communities from mid-December. Do look out for the magazine in local cafes, shops, accommodation, libraries, tourist information centres, and other community hubs. The magazine will remain online too, and is free to download at www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk

Neighbourhood Matters

The December 2024 edition of OUR NEWS is here

We are pleased to bring you the latest edition of our newsletter for Neighbourhood Watch supporters across England and Wales.

Before you read our newsletter, here are a few notes to remember...

** The Central Support Team office will be closed from Monday 23rd December - Thursday 2nd January, and so you might not receive an immediate reply to your phone call or email. However, you will still be able access our website and all of our crime prevention and safety resources over this period.*

** Thank you to everyone who attended our webinars in November - we were joined by the London Borough of Newham, Resolve ASB & the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, who all provided opportunities for meaningful discussion & knowledge sharing. You can view recordings from the session on this page of our website. If you attended one of these sessions, your feedback would be hugely appreciated!* We will soon be launching our 2024 Cybercrime survey - please keep your eyes peeled for this! You will receive a link to complete the survey via an Alert message, and we will also share the survey link via our social media channels.*

Here are some highlights in December's Our News newsletter:

** Remember the NW Shop when buying your Christmas gifts*

** Enter ERA's prize draw to win a home security bundle over £200*

** We're proud to introduce our new partnership with Phonely, working together to keep you protected from scams*

** Making your lists and checking them twice... cybersecurity with Avast*

** SimpliSafe offer advice on keeping your home secure this Christmas, and how to have fun at the same time*

** LockLatch share recipes for festive homemade dog treats - don't forget to check out their PetLatch product!*

** The Master Locksmiths Association (MLA) help us stay safe over the festive period*

Parish and Town Council Newsletter

20 December 2024 - From Wychavon District Council

Parish Priorities

31 December 2024 from West Mercia Police

"Dear Parish Council Members,

I hope this email finds you all well.

I am contacting you for your priorities that you would like us to look at for the period January to March 2025.

In relation to the priorities, I am aware that there has been some confusion around what this looks like. Firstly, it is important to understand that you do not have to have any 'priorities', and that if you don't, this will not impact on our response to your parish. If you do have a

priority (maximum of 3), then please provide what this is, along with details. An example would be – anti social behaviour which occurs on a Friday night from 2000hrs until 2300hrs at the park, 10 young people are normally present, drinking alcohol, being abusive to people at the village hall and possibly smoking drugs. We don't know any names, but one child gets picked up in a red car.

What this example does, is help my team patrol at the correct times and correct locations. Currently, most Parish councils just provide – anti social behaviour or drugs, speeding, without detail, which results in my teams being unable to target the problem. If you cannot provide detail, I would suggest that as a Parish Council you ask yourselves 'do we need this as a priority'.

It is also important to remember that the priorities should be community led, rather than from individuals.

I am sure you can appreciate that attending all meetings for my staff is difficult, so please let me know if you would like attendance at a specific meeting, or if you don't need attendance, then also please let me know. As a minimum you should all be receiving quarterly updates on your priorities.

I am more than happy to discuss the subject of the community charter if there is still some confusion or on any other subject around neighbourhood policing. I am always keen for suggestion's around how best my teams can engage and feedback with yourselves but also your communities. For instance, is there value in us holding a 'walkabout' in your village or is there something else the community would like. Please come back to me with ideas.

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon."

Rural Services Network

8 January 2025 RSN Rural Funding Digest - January 2025 Edition

Parish and Town Council event - 6 March 2025 – 6.00pm

9 January 2025

"Dear Parish/Town Clerk

*You are invited to our next parish/town council event taking place on **Thursday 6 March 2025** at the Civic Centre, Pershore from **6.00 to 8.00pm**. Registration and refreshments will be available from 5.30pm.*

The evening will be chaired by Councillor Emma Simms, Chair of Communities Panel and will begin with an update from Councillor Chris Day, Leader of the Council, on what's been happening over the past year.
Jonathan Morgan, Electoral Services Manager, will talk to you about elections and best practice for dealing with vacancies.

Ciaran Power, Head of Planning Services, will let you know about the proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.

We also will be running three workshop sessions (please let me know which one you would like to attend):

- *Rural Transport Research – outcomes of Wychavon's recent research into rural transport and your feedback and thoughts on the findings.*
- *Neighbourhood Plans – what they are, what are the benefits, how to get started and the road to adopting it.*
- *Introduction to Lucy Bird, Health and Wellbeing Officer at Worcestershire County Association for Local Councils (CALC) who will outline her role supporting town and parish councils to improve the wellbeing of residents living and working in their communities.*

We will also hear from a couple of our Parish Councils on their experiences of completing a large-scale project.

*Places are limited to **two** representatives per parish and **three** per town so please let me know who will be attending by **12 noon on 26 February 2025** and please let me know if attendees have any access or other requirements you would like us to be aware of.*
If you have any questions about the proposed planning policy reforms that you would like us to answer during the event, please email them to me before 12noon on 26 February 2025."

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

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

Birlingham **News 342 – 27 November 2024**

The online edition contains:

- Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 4th December
- St James' Church News – Christmas services
- New Year's Eve Party at the Village Hall
- Tutored Cheese and Wine Tasting – Sold Out
- Snow in Birlingham
- Carols and Christingles, Sunday 15th December
- Parish Council Report from 20th November
- '20 is plenty' – identifying the benefits of a 20mph limit in Residential Areas
- Planning Applications – The Bungalow, Upper End (refused)
- Recent photographs of the village and dates for your diary between now and mid-January

Birlingham **News 343 – 11 December 2024**

The online edition contains:

- Birlingham News, Next Edition, Saturday 28th December
- St James' Church News – Christmas services
- Carols and Christingles, Sunday 15th December
- New Year's Eve Party at the Village Hall
- Snowdrop Teas
- Festive Cuppa & Chat photos
- Christmas Bin Collections
- Bin Collection Calendar 2025
- Your Naughty and Nice Christmas Recycling Guide
- Birlingham Bystander (Autumn 2014)
- Recent photographs of the village and dates for your diary between now and the end of January

Birlingham **News 344 – 28 December 2024**

The online edition contains:

- New Year's Eve Party, Tuesday 31st December
- Cuppa & Chat, no event in January
- Village Quiz, Saturday 18th January
- St James' Church News (Morning Praise, Sunday 12th January)
- Carols and Christingles Photos (15th December)
- New Year Bin Collections & Recycling Guide
- Birlingham 2024: The Year in Pictures
- Recent photographs of the village and dates for your diary between now and mid-February

Birlingham **News 345 – 8 January 2025**

The online edition contains:

- St James' Church News: Morning Praise, Sunday 12th January
- Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 15th January
- Birlingham IW, Thursday 16th January
- Village Quiz, Saturday 18th January
- Cuppa & Chat, Wednesday 5th February
- Birlingham's little NYE 'do' is a big hit!
- Snowdrop Teas 2025
- Safer Neighbourhood Team Drop-in Session, Saturday 18th January (Eckington Village Hall)
- Birlingham Bystander (Spring 2015)
- Recent photographs of the village and dates for your diary between now and the end of February