Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19 March 2025

In Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

Councillors Paula Aston (PA), Steven Byrne (SB), David Glover (DG), Michael Porter (MP) and Ian Yates (IY).

In attendance:

Clerk June Hiden (JH) and 2 residents

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by Councillor Rupert Day due to being on holiday. The apologies were accepted. Apologies were received from District Councillor Middlebrough as he was attending a special meeting called by Wychavon District Council. Apologies from Footpath Warden Bruce Hayward and Lengthsman Carl Brassington.

Resignation

Katie Parsons has decided to step down from the Parish Council. Katie has said that she valued the experience. The Chairman thanked Katie saying she has been an appreciated member of the team. She was thanked for her work, along with her planning expertise and assistance with village project funding initiatives.

2. Declaration of Interest

There was a declaration of interest from Councillor Paula Aston with reference to the tree preservation order works application.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2025, 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.

- Fly tipping. The Chairman asked that it be noted that there was fly tipping on the Asham track adjacent to Eckington Road.

- Speed / surveys / signage

  <u>20 is Plenty</u>

  A summary sent on behalf of the Residents Group has been received from Councillor Rupert Day.

  Further discussion took place identifying the benefits of a 20mph limit in Residential Areas

  The residents attending from Upper End said they the project has hit a 'brick wall' due to policies. The proposal put forward to Worcestershire County Council identified many of the relevant points set out in The Government Guidance Setting Local Limits (updated March 2024). However, the proposal was rejected by the Head of Traffic Management

at WCC as not meeting their policy relating to 20mph limits, which only considers it in limited situations as follows:

• Outside schools through advisory limits.

• At accident collision cluster sites.

• In connection with major projects as appropriate.

• For all new residential development through appropriate design.

As a result, the Parish Council was asked if they would be willing to write to Marc Baylis, the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways and Transport at Worcestershire County Council asking why the authority is not aligned with the National Guidance on the issue of assessing speed limits and how their decision was taken. (Agreement at Item 7)

Surveys/signage/other

Other Parish Councils have been having similar issues with speed and have been putting up their own signage.

There was discussion on other actions that the Parish Council could consider. These included:

• Improved signage, including radar-activated speed signs

• Traffic calming in the form of additional painted lines, indicating where the road narrows

• Further meetings with the farm to ensure that the existing guidance to hauliers regarding preferred routes and time restrictions on access to the village is being followed. (Item 7)

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden: none.

The Warden has been copied in on correspondence received by the Clerk between Defford Parish Council and Worcestershire County Council regarding the footbridge/causeway (Gravelly to Defford).
Warden has been notified of the issue raised on Footpath 510 (Jubilee Wood to Withy Way). Clerk to address with Redstar Growers.

b) Tree Warden: none.

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

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

Wychavon Finances

The Council approved a budget with a 2.5% council tax increase in 2025/26.
A £19,000 fund was made available to help communities across Wychavon mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. Wychavon is making £250 available to town and parish councils to support activities on and around Thursday 8th May to celebrate a significant milestone in the nation's history. As well as the dedicated fund, Wychavon is also scrapping fees for road closure notices for anyone holding a street party on 5th May, 8th May or over the weekend from 9th to 11th May 2025.

Changes to Councils
Whatever happens on 31st March 2028, Wychavon District Council, along with Wyre Forest, Worcester City, Redditch, Malvern Hills and Bromsgrove councils, as well as Worcestershire County Council, will cease to exist. The service provided by all the

councils will be run by either a new council covering the footprint of the existing Worcestershire or two councils, one covering the north of Worcestershire and the other covering the south of Worcestershire. The new councils are called unitary councils, covering all county and district functions from dustbins to coroners, planning to potholes. Many county areas have already gone through the changes, such as Wiltshire, Dorset and Shropshire. At Wychavon we are having a council meeting on 19th March to decide whether the council supports the one-Worcestershire or a two-Worcestershire approach. The Government will decide in November what will happen.

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 not available. The members wished it to be noted that Councillor Hardman be thanked for the 2 grants that had been received from him for the Arts Group and Cuppa & Chat.

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

5. Planning

a) Planning applications – none

b) Applications determined: -

i. W/25/00056/CLE The Bungalow, Upper End, WR10 3AA
Certificate of lawfulness for the existing operational development and use of the single dwellinghouse known as The Bungalow, specifically not subject to any agricultural occupancy conditions
Applicant – Mr and Mrs P Haydon

Parish Council comments:
"*The Parish Council has considered the application and has no comments to make and is content to leave it to the case officer to determine the application in accordance with the relevant policy and legislation.*"
Additional comments
"*The Parish Council wishes to make an additional comment. It has come to our attention that the application doesn't just include the land the house is on, but also one of the glasshouses that is outside the legal title for the house. Is this in order given that it's an application to regularise the bungalow as a dwelling house, or should this land be excluded from the application? The access land also appears to go through the adjacent nursery site. The case officer may wish to check the land registry titles for the site*."
APPROVED 5 March 2025

For information as boundary with Birlingham parish.

W/23/02112/OUT - Orchard Farm Defford Road Pershore WR10 3BX
Planning application for the demolition of existing farmhouse, agricultural buildings and structures, the erection of a phased development of up to 300 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) and associated public open space, drainage, infrastructure and engineering works with all matters reserved except access

Decision - Allowed on appeal 29 January 2025

Tree Works

W/25/00285/TPOA (Tree preservation order application (works to))
Hills Cottage Upper End WR10 3AA
Proposal - Undertake tree works, as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
Approval 11 March 2025

W/25/00336/CAN (Tree works within a conservation area)
St James Church Rectory Lane Birlingham
Proposal - Undertake tree works, as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
Pending decision

c) Enforcement: - none

Due to the resignation of Katie Parsons, the planning group lead becomes vacant. Councillor Steven Byrne will head the group as he has previously and there were no objections.

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2024/2025

i) Bank balances - current is £2,416.87 as at end of February 2025 and Business saving balance is £18,516.14 as at end of February 2025.

Note: Transfer to £5,000.00 from current (Community) account to savings (Instant Access) account actioned by Clerk.

ii) CIL balance - 2024 – 2025 is noted on the spreadsheet and there is no change.

iii) Receipts

i. £175.00 – Worcestershire County Council Lengthsman
ii. £245.00 – Worcestershire County Council Lengthsman
iii. £250.00 – Worcestershire County Councillor's Divisional Fund
iv. £250.00 – Worcestershire County Councillor's Divisional Fund

v) Payments agreed: –

i. £87.50 - Lengthsman August 2024
ii. £43.75 – Lengthsman November 2024 (transaction date 23.1.25)
iii. £175.00 – Lengthsman December 2024 (transaction date 23.1.25)
iv. £338.62 – Wychavon District Council Litter Bin cleanse and emptying (transaction date 20.1.25)
v. £670.00 – Clerk's pay October, November, December (cheque 760)
vi. £104.28 – Clerk's expenses October, November, December (cheque 761)
vii. £162.60 – Clerk's PAYE October, November, December (cheque 762) correction required PAYE submission for third quarter Clerk error. £162.60 should have been £167.60. £5.00

b) Future payments for consideration

i. £22.00 - Birlingham Village Hall January 2025 (transaction date 23.1.25)
ii. £22.00 – Birlingham Village Hall March 2025
iii. £22.00 – Birlingham Village Hall May 2025
iv. £47.00 – ICO (£52 discount for DD of £5) Annual Renewal
v. £167.60 – PAYE January, February, March final quarter (plus £5.00 error to add)
vi. £670.00 – Clerk's pay January, February, March
vii. £104.28 - Clerk's expenses January, February, March

viii. £250.00 – Ian Morphett annual charge for maintenance of the Millennium Bench for 2025.
ix. £245.00 – Lengthsman January 2025
x. £157.50 – Lengthsman February 2025
xi. £250.00 – County Councillor's Divisional Grant (Cuppa & Chat)
xii. £250.00 – County Councillor's Divisional Grant (Art Group) (transaction date 24.2.25)
xiii. £250.00 – VE commemoration grant – discussion below. (funding due date 17.3.25)

c) Lengthsman Scheme 2024 – 2025 update on invoicing for year end. Invoices to be received before 31 March 2025 as 'dashboard' system issues.

The Annual Agreement for 2025 – 2026 contract is due. However, the Lengthsman funding for 2025 – 2026 has been notified as £2,346.16.

d) Budget Acknowledgement from Wychavon District Council for the Budget requirement in the sum of £7,304. This will result in a Band D charge of £41.29 on the 2025-26 Council Tax Demand, an increase of 1.0% compared with the current year's charge.

7. Discuss actions from previous meeting

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

Templates of the proforma drafted by Katie Parson covering an explanation of project funding for community groups to be forwarded by Katie Parsons to the Chairman. Councillor David Glover to receive a copy.

20 is Plenty

As discussed in the Democratic Opening by the Residential Group representatives. The Parish Council is still supporting the Group but want a clearer strategy if there is to be further discussions. At this time, it was agreed by members that the following would be actioned by the Parish Council :

> The Parish Council will now be writing to Marc Baylis, the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways and Transport at WCC asking why WCC is not aligned with the National Guidance on the issue of assessing speed limits and how their decision was taken. A draft letter has been received and this will be edited and circulated to members before being sent.

Speeding/signage/other

Further ways to progress speed is being made by the Group. The Parish Council have tried addressing speed before many times and the measuring strips have been actioned again with the overall results being that traffic is within the 30mph limit.

Speak to Redstar Growers. Can the size of the lorries be reduced? Time of day HGV's entering the village.

Potential signage and traffic calming. White line painting. The Group will look at advisory signs, activated speed awareness signs and road narrowing to bring back to the next meeting. The group were made aware that road narrowing has been investigated previously and that this is normally in roads with streetlights.

Highway Issues

Flooding at Lower End near Manor Paddock.

Severn Trent again visited the site. They inserted a camera from the Manor field up through Manor Stables but the camera was prohibited from moving closer than c 6m from the Manor stable boundary with the Moors. The onsite operative said it was because the repair to a broken pipe in Manor stables which they undertook c 3 years ago was not done correctly as the pipes at one juncture had an overlapping lip which stopped the camera. This meant they could not put the camera through the pipe up to and c 2/3 m into the Moors where STW agreed to report this back to head office.

Subsequently head office are again trying to say it is not their responsibility (as they tend to do every couple of years in order to try to avoid liability).

Councillor Byrne will continue to pursue the matter.
SB

Parish / Town Event – 6 March 2025

Councillor Rupert Day was unable to attend the event however, slides of the presentation have been circulated to the members. Various topics Included Elections proposed for May 2027 and Neighbourhood Planning.

Police and Parish Priorities

Councillor David Glover attempted to attend an event at Defford which was cancelled at short notice. He will go to Eckington when a date has been arranged.
DG

8. VE Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations

The VE Day celebrations are taking place on Monday 5 May 2025 and Thursday 8 May 2025. The Jubilee Committee has contacted the Parish Council and are to advertise through the Birlingham News for interest and volunteers for an event on bank holiday Monday.

The Jubilee Committee is aware of the funding through Wychavon District Council that is to be made available.

9. Defibrillator - Contribution towards battery replacement

Birlingham Village Hall committee have requested a contribution towards the cost of the replacement batteries for the defibrillator. The Clerk has asked for a copy of the invoice for costs. It was agreed that 50% would be given - £132.00

10. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

- Bulb teas. It has been requested that the Cricket Club be approached regarding use of the club for parking vehicles visiting the churchyard at weekends when the hall is open for teas. Vehicles are being park on the verges. Councillor David Glover will action.
  DG

11. 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 16 July 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

Potholes

Upper End

Reference number 70516 (Court House) 30 January 2025 - Completed

Reference number 70517 (Barncroft) 30 January 2025 - Completed

Pothole Reference number 73337 13 February 2025 - reported "I have reported the pothole by Court Cottages again as it has started to open up."





Drainage / Flooding

Upper End

Reference number 70645 (Coach House) 17 February 2025
Blocked gully

Other Road or Pavement issues

Reference 75716 15 March 2025 - *"I have reported the faded and damaged 30mph repeaters on Shorthill and Church Street again."*

Shorthill



Church Street





Public Right of Way

Reference number 75239 7 March 2025 - Footpath 504 adjacent to Leyfield, Church Street
"Resident reported this dangerous style to me, so I had a look and have reported it to WCC. It's very dilapidated and could collapse."



Footpath Warden, Bruce has been notified. There is also a bag of rubble adjacent to the footpath which the footpath warden has been made aware of.

Appendix 2 – Clerk's Report

Highways / Public Rights of Way

- The Causeway Footpath 510 - Gravelly Hill to Defford

Communications:
2 March 2025 from Defford resident to Defford Clerk and copied to Birlingham
"When will the causeway restoration work now be finished with the improved weather? We were in desperate need of the full causeway this last winter (and the winter before that, and the winter before that)"
Birlingham Clerk - Phil Coulson, Public Rights of Way Operations Manager was asked for an update but Birlingham are not responding to resident.
Defford Clerk replied saying she would make contact and give any further updates.
19 March 2025 – nothing to update currently.

- Nafford – Footpath BL-522

Notification from Footpaths, Worcestershire County Council
13 March 2025
An emergency Notice of Closure was issued for a 3-day closure.
Clerk asked for further information and was advised works are for weir and footbridge inspection and then clarified again that it was the EA. Clerk visited site on 15 March 2025 and access open.

"The work is only likely to take two days, as the applicant says "Inspections to take estimate of 1 day per structure. It is inspection of the condition of the underside of the weir and the sluice.
Rope access is required to Nafford Sluice and Nafford Weir footbridges to undertake a non-intrusive condition survey of each structure for the Environment Agency. This rope access will prevent use of the footbridges by members of the public.
No other feasible and safe way to access the underside of the footbridges to inspect them."

Circulations to Councillors

Lengthsman - Chairman's email to Carl Brassington

January – "We certainly appreciate the work you do and that you are prepared to continue in Birlingham even though you're ending work at other parish councils. We were happy to approve the increase to £20/hr at this week's meeting. Please keep me or June informed how you are coping this year and any plans for next year. Best wishes"

Clerk to make enquiries about Lengthsman.

Severn Trent Water - Your Severn Trent Councillor Newsletter

21 January

Welcome to your Councillor Newsletter
January 2025 Edition
Welcome to the first edition of your Councillor Newsletter from Severn Trent.
We're all living in a time of change—both economically and environmentally—and we want to help you navigate it. You can use this newsletter to find out about how we're supporting your constituents with affordability challenges, the environment, and how we're supporting local communities across our region.
Councillor enquiries
As a Councillor you already have a lot on your plate. There are lots of demands placed on you and often you need to respond to your constituents' issues quickly.
You now have access to a dedicated email address at Severn Trent, set up for councillors to ask about casework, events or anything else – this email is: cllr.enquiries@severntrent.co.uk
We're here for you
It's the time for cosy jumpers and hot water bottles. But it's not always the easiest time of year for everyone. That's where we come in.
Our army of Severn Trent helpers are here to help – whether it's stopping a costly, smelly blockage, advice around protecting homes from leaks, or helping your constituent's access support to make paying bills easier. So, let's weather the winter, together.
Let's weather the winter together
Big Difference Scheme
Your constituents could get up to 70% off the average Severn Trent bill.
We want water bills to be one less thing for people in our area to worry about. For any household with a total income below £22,010, our Big Difference Scheme can offer a reduction of Severn Trent water bills.
We assess household income to calculate how much of a reduction your constituents are eligible for. The scheme runs for 12 months at a time and customers can apply again at the end of each year-long period.
Please share our Big Difference Scheme and encourage people to apply by following the button below.
Big Difference Scheme
Doing right by our communities, together
Severn Trent Community Fund - our customers, and the places we live and work in, are at the heart of everything we do. And that's why we've given away more than £10million over five years to support new projects led by local charities and community groups in the Severn Trent region - helping to make a real and tangible difference in our communities.
To give you an idea of the types of projects that we can support, look at some of the projects we've funded so far.
Before applying, we encourage organisations to talk about their project idea with one of our dedicated Fund Officers. We can tell you if it's a good fit for our aims and what to expect with the application process.
Are there any good causes in your constituency that could benefit? Please share this with them and ask them to get in touch at communityfund@severntrent.co.uk
Severn Trent Community Fund
Severn Trent Green Power
Making the holiday season sustainable by recycling Christmas leftovers
Rather than seeing discarded food go to landfill, we can do something about it. Severn Trent Green Power is one of the largest food waste recyclers in the country. A quarter of all England and Wales' separately collected household food waste, and around 12% of commercial collected food waste, goes to our Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facilities.
What do we do with it? All the food waste we deal with is turned into:
Renewable energy to fuel UK homes and businesses
Nutrient-rich liquid bio-fertiliser, used by UK farmers to grow the fruit and vegetables that end up back on our plates
We're already working with more than 65 Local Authorities, plus many waste collection businesses, catering outlets, food manufacturers and retailers. All our sites have robust de-packaging systems, which means we can accept a wide variety of food wastes containing various types of primary and secondary packaging.
Severn Trent Green Power Video

Thanks for reading this first Councillor Newsletter and we hope you found it useful. If there's anything you want to ask us about, don't forget your dedicated email address - cllr.enquiries@severntrent.co.uk

Parish and Town Council event

Slides and feedback circulated – discussion at Item 7 on the agenda.
Included update from Councillor Chris Day, Leader of the Council, Jonathan Morgan, Electoral Services Manager, Ciaran Power, Head of Planning Services, proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system. Workshop - 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.

Local government reorganisation in Worcestershire
The creation of unitary government in Worcestershire is now to take place in April 2028. This means County Council Elections take place in May this year. Letter circulated.

Birlingham News - Extracts of interest

All News can be found online at birlingham.org

Birlingham News 347 – 12 February 2025

Noted: Local Government Reorganisation

PCC newsletter - February 2025 from John Campion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner