Birlingham Parish Council

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 19 November 2025

In Birlingham Village Hall

Councillors:

Councillors Paula Aston (PA), Steven Byrne (SB), Rupert Day (RD), Michael Porter (MP) and Ian Yates (IY).

In attendance: Clerk June Hiden (JH), 2 residents and their 2 guests.

Welcome – The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were tendered by Councillor David Glover who was abroad. The apologies were accepted. Apologies were received from County Councillor Adrian Hardman and District Councillor Paul Middlebrough who were attending the Wychavon District Council Executive and Board meetings. Apologies from Footpath Warden Bruce Hayward and Lengthsman Carl Brassington.

2. Declaration of Interest

Councillor Paula Aston declared an interest in Planning, Item 5.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September July 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. There were no discussions at this stage of the meeting.

4. Progress Reports

a) Footpath Warden: nothing to report.

b) Tree Warden, Rupert Day:

i. The landowner has cut the trees adjacent to The Avenue, as requested. The remaining tree will be addressed by the Warden.

c) Lengthsman, Carl Brassington:

i. There are no new highway issues to report.
ii. Of the outstanding issues there is still the problem –
Maryworth Barn area which occurs during heavy inundations.
Barncroft is usually caused by leaf fall or other debris blocking the grid. As soon as this is cleared the flooding recedes.
iii. Manor House Paddock - The running water has stopped over the summer and has yet to re-appear. I am not aware of any further work that has been carried out on this.
iv. The kerb stones at the war memorial were damaged some time ago and could do with resetting.

I would like to thank the Parish Council for the past work over the years and hope that you will find a suitable replacement as soon as possible.

Carl has given his notice to finish as Lengthsman at the end of December 2025. Carl has been winding his work down over the last twelve months and feels that December is the right time to finish.

15 October 2025 email to Clerk noted Carl's official termination notice date.

Councillor Paula Aston contacted the Clerk at Stoulton to enquire about the Lengthsman in their parish.

Clerk to advertise and action the vacancy further.
JH

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

"Key issues for Birlingham Residents:-

Local Government Reorganisation

"The Council's proposal for a new unitary local government structure in Worcestershire support the case for a North and South Worcestershire (two unitary councils) model.

Working with Malvern Hills and Worcester City to shape a thriving Worcestershire, North and South, where every community flourishes and public satisfaction drives everything, we do. Through bold local leadership and the power of devolution, we will unlock opportunity, remove barriers, and deliver services that truly reflect the needs of our people and places.

By creating two dynamic councils rooted in local identity, we will build vibrant, sustainable communities where residents and partners can grow, connect, and succeed. This is our commitment: a local and responsive Worcestershire, driven by what works best for each unique area.

While a single unitary council offers greater savings, the North & South model provides a viable approach focused on local delivery and outcomes. In reshaping services and supporting proactive transformation, residents and customers will see more robust and efficient councils in the future.

The two unitary council option protects our residents from a vicious harmonisation of council tax to bring it up to the levels in Redditch.

The proposal covers community engagement / empowerment and details the potential for parish and town councils to have a key role as representatives on any neighbourhood area committees for local decision making and working alongside integrated neighbourhood teams.

The council will vote on supporting this approach on 19th November and submit it to Government by 28th November.

It is the government who have imposed the unitary solution, and they will decide on the next steps in March of next year."

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

e) County Councillor:

Councillor Adrian Hardman arrived as the meeting closed. Councillor Hardman had updated the Clerk and has said that he has raised the road narrowing markings in Upper End with Barry at Highways. He has said that it will be with contractors.

f) Clerk - See ***Appendix 1***

5. Planning

a) Planning applications:

i. W/ 25/02072/CCO - Hills Cottage Upper End Birlingham Pershore WR10 3AA
Discharge of conditions 4 (Bat mitigation strategy) and 5 (External lighting) of planning application W/25/02657/HP.
PENDING

b) Applications determined:

i. W/25/01415/HP - Peacock Barn, Lower End WR10 3AD
Removal of existing sheds and construction of outbuilding
Applicant: Sir Peter Luff

Parish Council comments:
The Parish Council has no objection to the proposal in the application; however, as volunteered by the applicant within the planning documents, we would request that up to the extent of your powers, you condition the consent that the new structure/footprint thereof, cannot and will not be used as living accommodation.

APPROVED 30 September 2025

ii. W/25/01685/CCO - Chance Cottage, Broadway Road WR10 3AF
Proposal - Discharge of Condition 3 (EMES) of planning permission W/25/00571/HP
Application Type - Condition Discharge

APPROVED 1 October 2025

c) Tree Works

W/25/02208/CAN - Tree works within a conservation area
St James Church Rectory Lane Birlingham
Undertake tree works as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
PENDING

DECISIONS

W/25//01935/CAN - Tree works within a conservation area
White Posts Whitehall Lane WR10 3AB
Undertake tree works, as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
APPROVED – 22 September 2025

W/25/01989/CAN - Tree works within a conservation area
The Old Rectory New Barn Lane Birlingham Pershore WR10 3AB
Undertake tree works, as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
APPROVED – 22 September 2025

W/25/02190/CAN – Tree works within a conservation area
Undertake tree works as detailed on application form and in any accompanying information.
The Old Rectory New Barn Lane Birlingham Pershore WR10 3AB
APPROVED – 27 October 2025

d) Enforcement: -

Worcestershire County Council Enforcement Plan to the Parish Council

Our ref: ENFPLAN2025 (consultation database reference: 530)
RE: Worcestershire County Council Enforcement Plan

Worcestershire County Council, as the County Planning Authority are responsible for the monitoring of planning conditions attached to planning permissions for minerals developments, waste management facilities, and the County Council's own developments, such as libraries, schools, roads and railway stations. In addition, it investigates allegations of breaches of planning control associated with mineral and waste activities.

The Enforcement Plan has been reviewed to take account of the updated guidance contained in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), and the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024.

The Enforcement Plan sets out how the council will operate its planning enforcement function and has now been adopted.
The Enforcement Plan can be found as follows:

https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments /planning-monitoring-and-enforcement

Please contact me if you require any further information regarding the above matter.
Mark Lane
Planning Monitoring & Enforcement Officer
Email: planenforcement@worcestershire.gov.uk

6. Financial Matters

a) The Accounts for 2025/2026

i) Bank balances - current is £6,549.66 as at end of October 2025 and Business saving balance is £18,612.53 as at end of October 2025. The CIL balance is noted on the spreadsheet and currently there are no further updates.

ii) Receipts

i. £3,651.00 (£3,562.00 precept and £89.00 grant) – Wychavon District Council
ii. £240.00 - Worcestershire County Council

iii) Payments agreed: –

i. £120.00 – Lengthsman July 2025 (transaction 10.10.25)
ii. £4.25 – Service Charges (transaction 18.7.25)
iii. £4.25 – Service Charges (transaction 18.8.25)
iv. £4.25 – Service Charges (transaction 29.8.25)
v. £484.80 – Signs'R'Us £404.00 plus VAT £80.80 (transaction 10.10.25)

b) Future payments for consideration

i. £22.00 – Village Hall hire for November 2025
ii. £240.00 – Lengthsman September

iii. £120.00 – Lengthsman October
iv. £690.10 – Clerk's pay October, November, December
x. £172.40 – PAYE October, November, December
xi. £112.50 – Clerk's expenses October, November, December
v. £4.25 bank charges September
vi. £4.25 bank charges October

The bench maintenance invoice has been chased.

Pension Regulations to be documented in January 2026.

c) Budget setting: The pre-budget draft has been done by the Chairman and Financial Officer. Consideration given to the following:

To commence with discussion on level of balances it is appropriate for the Council to hold.

- Precept request / application was considered for January submission
- Grant is confirmed as £179.00

Included discussion:

- Clerks pay, PAYE and expenses – quarterly payments as per financial year and in line with RTI Insurance due in May
- CALC's fees – consider any increase in subscriptions
- Village Hall charges
- Training
- Litter Bins – annual charges
- Millennium Bench – annual charge
- Projects
- Charities/ poppy wreath
- Car allowance – 40 pence per mile (Adoption of Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

Financial Officer and Chairman summarised.

The Parish Council reviewed the budget for 2026/2027 and agreed to not increase the parish precept. It therefore remains the same as the previous 2025/2026 financial year. The Wychavon District Council budget is still awaited. Clerk to complete the application for the budget request by January 2026.
Action JH

Note: Lengthsman (Worcestershire County Council set target annually)

Footpath Warden – budget comes through Worcestershire County Council

7. Discuss actions from previous meeting

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

Village groups have been sent a questionnaire to help the Parish Council understand priorities that might be promoted, supported and subsidised. A number of ideas and suggestions have been received including a sign outside the village hall to commemorate 100 years, a contribution towards new central heating for the village hall, new village marquee, table tennis and pickle ball equipment if supported by the village hall, planters/troughs at the entrance to the village, speed sign and restoration of the traditional signpost on the main road at Upper End.

The Birlingham Village Hall (BVH) suggestion of a consultant for professional advice on a replacement boiler was estimated to cost £3,000 to £4,000 and it was agreed that this was not a suitable use of the CIL funding. Councillor Steven Byrne was willing to source information to give suggestions to BVH without so much cost. Councillor Byrne will ask if he can assist.
SB

Councillor Rupert Day has some stone troughs which are heavy but could be used at the entrances to the village, so there would be no funding needed for this.
RD

The details will be summarised by Councillor David Glover in a Birlingham News article with the extended date for any further suggestions.
DG

Speeding/signage/other - Addressing concerns over speeding, residential disruption and pedestrian safety.

Work continues to address resident concerns. The signage appears to be slowing vehicles down, particularly when by pedestrians. A reminder will be put in the Birlingham News and a picture.

There was discussion on the white lines. What was agreed? Clerk updated and said that Barry at Highways has said that the signage and lining was arranged by the Traffic Management Team however he will follow up with them. At the time he was apologising that it hadn't been completed however lines have appeared seemingly not as agreed.

Further work has been undertaken to identify hauliers who are ignoring RedStar's transport policy by entering the village before 06:00 (in summer) and 07:00 (in winter). The farm is happy to receive any evidence and will address this with their account managers. Photographic records of early morning lorry movements for August, September, October and part November were presented to Redstar at a meeting on 7 November 2025. This showed that a significant percentage of lorries were ignoring the policy with some even entering before 05:00. The haulier responsible was identified and Redstar have agreed to contact them to try and improve the situation. The minutes have been circulated to all members.

The Parish Council will speak to District Councillor Middlebrough to see what options are available. Clerk to be copied in on communications.

Councillor Rupert Day will attend the Worcester County Council Meeting on 15 January 2026 to ask questions about their policy on 20mph speed limits. Councillor Day will draft together points for the meeting regarding communication with local Parish Councils and circulate beforehand for agreement.
RD

Highway Issues - Flooding at Lower End near Manor Paddock

Councillor Steven Byrne is in conversation with Severn Trent Water.

Notice at Swans Neck

There is no further update at the time of the meeting on the mapping information. The LANT sign has been removed for refurbishment and will then be returned to be erected against the fence which has been agreed with Revill's.

8. Public Rights of Way (PROW) and Highways

At the 7 November 2025 meeting at Woodfield Farm, a further discussion took place regarding Public Rights of Way in two locations. It was suggested that the farm manager should address any issues.

Footpath 510C from The Avenue to Withy Walk.

There is not a gap in the planting to allow walkers to cross the field on the designated footpath.

The manager explained that the field where the footpath crosses has had two crops of broccoli this year. For the first crop a gap was left, however unfortunately the second crop was planted by a different driver who wasn't aware of the footpath, so this was an oversight.

Footpath 506C from The Avenue (memorial) below The Old Rectory.

There is an alternative footpath route, rather than a Permissive path - access to which can be withdrawn. It would be better to have a gap in the crops. If a proposal was put to the Parish Council of a designated alternative route during planting this would be considered favourably. The Parish Council would also be happy to consider the merits of an application for a formal diversion application.

The farm manager has said the PROW team from the County Council visited and agreed that the path was allowing walkers a clearly marked alternative route. They agreed it was a reasonable trade-off given the extensive network of permissive paths the farm has made available to the public (approximately 3 miles) and did not have an issue.

The Parish Council recognises and is grateful for the efforts that the farm has made to allow residents to walk across its land via various Permissive Paths. However, a response will be sent to Jon Sansome, farm manager addressing his points. A draft email will be circulated to members for agreement with the communication then being sent to the farm.
RD

Mud on the Avenue

The Avenue below the memorial was covered in mud during field work opposite Millennium Wood. This has been cleaned. The Clerk also mentioned that Broadway Road had been cleaned on a couple of occasions by the farm, also due to their field work.

9. Lengthsman – Retirement

Carl Brassington, Birlingham's long standing Lengthsman, has decided to retire at the end of December. Since Carl has served the village well for many years the Parish Council would like to thank him on behalf of the parish for all his hard work and wish him a happy retirement.

10. Remembrance

The poppy wreath was laid at Eckington and Councillor Rupert Day laid the wreath at the service in Birlingham. It was commented on that again this year that the service started too soon.

11. Councillors' reports and items for next agenda

Nothing further to report.

12. Closure and date of next ordinary meeting - with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 20.05 and the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance.

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 21 January 2026 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 – Clerk's Report

i. Highways / Public Rights of Way

Road Sweeper

In the village week commencing 10 November 2025

Speed Activated Sign

A sign was advertised through CALC on behalf of Croome Parish Council 9 October 2025

> *Variable Speed Devices – surplus to requirement*
>
> *Due to an imminent upgrade, we have two working devices looking for a new home. Both units can be set to 20, 30 and 40mph and record the number of activations, with a red speed and 'slow down' message. They are battery-operated lasting between two and three weeks before a change is required, depending upon use. Originally costing in excess of £3000 per unit, these represent an inexpensive way of either providing a new asset or enhancing coverage where other units are already in operation.*
> *The package includes: 2x speed units, 3x batteries charger and cables. Depending upon location, new fittings will be required to attach to a pole or other structure as the existing straps will be re-used. There is no guarantee or indemnity offered, the items to be 'sold as seen'. They are currently in use in the village with no known issues. We are asking £350 per unit, with a £50 discount if both go to the same buyer.*

Clerk replied the following morning saying there was definite interest from Birlingham. However, a reply came through 17 October 2025to say they had already been sold.

Upper End - White Lines

Rupert Day to Barry Barnes - 20 October 2025

> *The Parish Council has asked me to write to you regarding the white lines to support the signage at the pinch point down Upper End. We had understood that these would be put in place at the same time as the signage but seem to have been overlooked. Maybe you could let us know if these are planned and if so, when might hey be completed.*

Public Rights of Way – Rupert Day to Redstar copied to Clerk

We discussed an issue with some footpaths across the farm with James on Friday. This has been raised with the Parish Council by a Birlingham resident and James said that you were the person who can address it.

1. Footpath 510C

We have been asked that the farm ensures that, going forward, there is a gap in the planting (currently Broccoli, I understand) to allow all walkers to cross the field on the designated footpath. Some of the village residents do have mobility issues and it is difficult for some of them to navigate the planting - at the same time it will ensure that walkers do not stray across the crops.

2. Footpath 506C

The same has happened in the field which is crossed by 506C. The resident notes that a Permissive path has been put in place allowing the walkers to go around the field. However, I understand that where the farm has restricted access to a designated footpath the farm has to allow walkers the similar access. This should therefore be classified as an alternative footpath route, rather than a Permissive path - access to which can be withdrawn. Again, it would be better to have a gap in the crops, but I believe that if a proposal was put to the Parish Council of a designated alternative route

during planting this would be considered favourably. Having said that, the Parish Council cannot stop any walker from crossing your field on the designated footpath - but most people I am sure would be reasonable if a temporary suitable alternative route was clearly marked. The Parish Council would also be happy to consider the merits of an application for a formal diversion application, if that would be helpful.

ii. Wychavon Rooftop Solar Feasibility Study

5 November 2025 from Wychavon District Council

> I write to inform you of a potential opportunity around the installation of solar panels on community buildings being brought forward by Crowle Community Energy (CCE), in partnership with Wychavon District Council.
>
> In summary, CCE have received Government funding to investigate the feasibility of solar panels on up to 50 public/community buildings around Wychavon. This may ultimately lead to CCE being able to offer the installation of solar panels for free, with your organisation purchasing the renewable energy at a cheaper rate. Saving money and reducing carbon emissions.
>
> If you are interested in having the feasibility of your building assessed, then please sign up here: Wychavon Rooftop Solar Feasibility Study (Town & Parish Councils) – Fill in form
>
> Signing up for the feasibility study comes with no obligation and any future installation would be subject to your further agreement.
>
> Matt Barker
> Carbon Reduction Manager
> Malvern Hills and Wychavon District Councils

This information was forwarded to Birlingham Village Hall (Paul Burton) who have contacted WDC.

iii. Dates and Times of PC meetings

A request came through from PC Alex Prentice, Safer Neighbourhood Officer | Evesham Rural | West Mercia Police, Evesham Police Station, Abbey Road, Evesham,

> *Could I please ask that, if possible, you send me the dates, times and location of your parish council meetings for the next year? Amongst the team, between PCSO's and PC's, we shall then look at when our shifts allow attend a meeting as per the Parish Charter. We have some changes within the team, so we will be notifying you of this shortly.*

Clerk has replied.

iv. Climate Change Adaptation Plans for Wychavon and Malvern Hill Parish/Town Councils workshop – 11 December

Communication from Matt Barker, Carbon Reduction Manager, WDC

> *Dear Town & Parish Councils,*
>
> *A key project that both Malvern Hills and Wychavon district councils are undertaking is around climate change adaptation. This is all about identifying the risks that are posed from a changing climate (i.e. changing weather patterns and extreme weather) as well as what we can to do prepare and protect our services and communities to cope. We are developing an adaption plan to set out our strategy for doing this.*

To help us with this we have commissioned Sustainability West Midlands, who have a lot of experience working with local authorities to prepare such plans, as well advising on adaptation at national and regional scale.

As part of our engagement and evidence gathering, we'd like to invite Town and Parish Councils from across the area to join us for a workshop so we can provide more information about the project and start to gather information on the local perspectives and experiences in this area. After the workshop there will also be further opportunity for you to feedback in more detail via a survey.

The workshop will take place on Thursday 11th December at 5pm. It will be a virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams.

If you would like to attend, then please use the link below to sign yourself up. As attendance is likely to be high, we are asking if you keep it to one representative from each council. The session will be recorded and the slides made available so others may view it afterwards.

Birlingham News - Extracts of interest

All News can be found online at birlingham.org

Birlingham News 364 – 8 October 2025

Potential Community Infrastructure Projects

Worcestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Closing date Sunday 26th October

Birlingham News 365 – 22 October 2025

Remembrance Day Service, Tuesday 11th November

Wychavon Residents' Survey 2025, closing date: Sunday 9th November

Worcestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, closing date: Sunday 26th October

Birlingham News 366 – 11 November 2025

Parish Council Meeting, Wednesday 19th November

New 20mph signs