Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 276 Wednesday 11th May 2022

Editorial

It used to be said that today's newspaper would become the wrapping for tomorrow's fish and chips – before health and safety regulations outlawed such practices. Yet, those old periodicals have now been scanned and catalogued and we can look up any edition of any newspaper on the internet, no matter how long ago it was printed.

Nowadays, the vast amount of online material that is generated daily is also being stored away somewhere in 'the cloud', presumably saved for ever, and we might worry that our throwaway Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts will still be out there somewhere, waiting to be read by our great-great-grand-children a hundred years from now. This might be a comforting thought – or it could be horrifying!

Perhaps this edition of *Birlingham News online* will be the invisible wrapping for tomorrow's virtual fish and chip supper. But hopefully, a century or more from now, the archive of PDFs will survive and provide an interesting insight for a new generation of Birlingham residents into life in the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Programme of Events

By Steve Morris

The programme of events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th June has now been finalised. There have been some changes to the programme, which now includes the Jubilee Quiz on the Friday; Street Party and children's Pudding Fit for a Queen competition on the Saturday; and Celebratory Church Service, Pram Race and Treasure Hunt on the Sunday. There is something for everybody; all we need now is some decent weather!

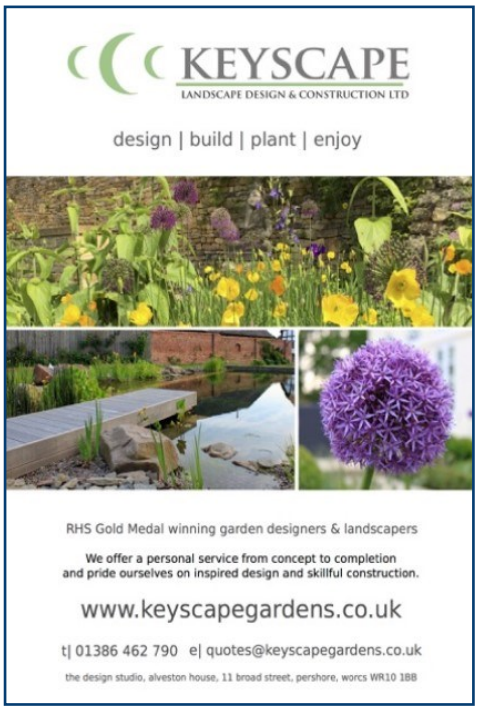
A programme will be delivered to every house over the next few days. Please take a moment to complete the accompanying form, so that we have some idea of numbers attending each event, and return it to the box in the church porch (or complete the form online).

The full programme is included on the next page.

We have also purchased commemorative china mugs, which can be ordered on the same form.







Annual Parish Meeting & Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday 18th May

The Annual Parish Meeting takes place on Wednesday 18th May at 7.00pm in Birlingham Village Hall. This meeting will receive reports from various village organisations about their activities during the year.

During the meeting there is an opportunity to express your views on local issues. Any member of the public can ask for an issue to be debated, even if they are unable to attend the meeting.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be followed by the regular bi-monthly Parish Council meeting.

The agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting is available at:
www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_agenda_2022-05-18A.pdf

The draft minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting on 19th May 2021 are available at:
www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_annual_2021-05-19.pdf

The agenda for the Parish Council meeting is available at:
www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_agenda_2022-05-18B.pdf

The draft minutes of the last Parish Council meeting on 16th March are available at:
www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_minutes_2022-03-16.pdf



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

Friday 3rd June	**Quiz Night**	7.30pm Village Marquee, Whitehall Lane
	Teams of 3-5, five rounds of ten Royal questions, prize for winning team. Bar available but please bring nibbles if you want. Entry fee £3 per person	
Saturday 4th June	**Street Party**	3.00pm–5.00pm Between Church Street and Whitehall Lane
	Trestle tables on the roads between the Church and the Village Hall. Bring your own picnic and a chair! Includes toast to the Queen (provided) and village photograph. Optional dress code: red, white and blue	
	A Pudding Fit for a Queen	Entries by 3.00pm Birlingham Village Hall
	Childrens competition. Bake a cake or cook a pudding fit for the Queen! Any type of cake or cold pudding to feed a minimum of 6 people. Age ranges 10 and under or 11–16. All children welcome to enter, whether they live in the village or are visiting for the Street Party	
Sunday 5th June	**Celebratory Church Service**	10.30am Led by Peter Stansbie
	A celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee with contributions in word and song by villagers of all ages. The congregation will be invited to join in with the singing of a variety of patriotic songs and hymns. Complimentary Union flags and refreshments provided	
	Pram Race	12.00pm (after service) Around the church
	Any wheeled, non-motorised vehicle is acceptable! The pram must contain one passenger and the route is twice around the church, with a shorter children's race. Dress for the occasion!	
	Treasure Hunt	2.00pm onwards Start at the Church
	Appealing to all ages and disabled-friendly, the Treasure Hunt takes in the majority of the village and the 70 clues (including picture clues) can be solved without leaving public areas. It is expected that the hunt will be done on foot. Prize for the winning family or group. Free entry	

Church Water Supply

By Peter Luff

Good news! After so many trials and tribulations St James' Church is on the verge of getting its water supply. The necessary pipework and standpipe were installed by local contractor AG Pritchard on 3rd May. The work has since been approved by Severn Trent Water for connection to the water main and we are now only waiting for a date for that connection.

In the end, and despite the concerns of Wychavon District Council, the work itself was very straightforward and no item of archaeological significance was found.

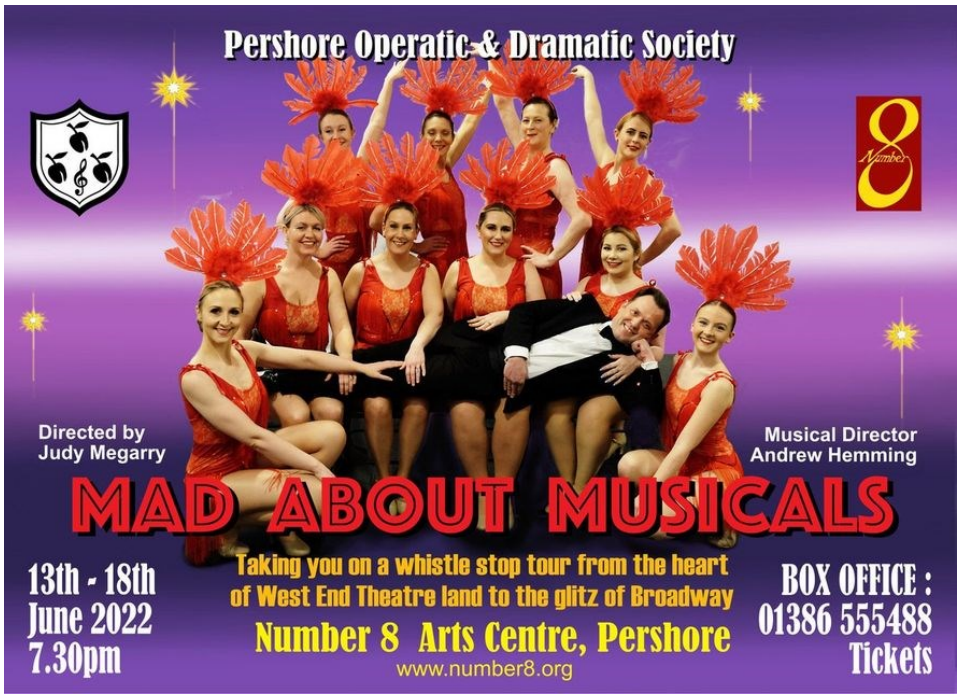


Family Friendly Summer Show by PODS

Monday June 13th to Saturday June 18th

Pershore Operatic & Dramatic Society (PODS) will perform *Mad about Musicals* at Number 8, Pershore from June 13th to 18th. This whistlestop tour from the heart of West End theatreland to the glitz of Broadway celebrates the finest songs from musical greats – past and present. Discounts are available on group bookings.

If you go to the production, please send us a review at news@birlingham.org.





The phone box begins its journey to Spalding, 28th April

Full story in the Spring Bystander

(Photo: Steve Cook)

Thrive Psychology

Private therapy for mental health and wellbeing

Dr Jane Woodward *DClinPsy*
Clinical Psychologist

The Art of Wellbeing Centre
36 High St, Pershore, WR10 1DP

Tel: 07597 894285
Email: thrive-psychology@hotmail.com

COVID-19 Community Recovery Fund

by Sean Cole, Communications Officer, Wychavon District Council

A £150,000 Community Recovery Fund has been launched by Wychavon to support community groups and organisations affected by the pandemic.

The funding is designed to aid the district's recovery from COVID, providing a welcome boost to services that benefit the local population.

Applications are open to any community groups or organisations operating in Wychavon, or providing services there, who need help with running costs or meeting increased demand due to the pandemic.

The fund, which was launched at the end of April, will be open until the end of October 2023, but will close earlier if all the money is allocated before then. Funding of between £300 and £10,000 is available to successful applicants depending on their needs.

Applicants will be expected to prove the impact that the pandemic has had on their organisation, how the funding will be used and the difference it will make to the people of Wychavon.

If an applicant is not a formally constituted group with its own bank account, they can partner with an appropriate constituted organisation in their area, such as the parish council or another community organisation, who will receive and administer the funds on their behalf.

Please contact Tracy Perkins at tracy.perkins@wychavon.gov.uk or visit https://www.wychavon.gov.uk/community-and-living/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-community-recovery-fund for more information about the Community Recovery Fund. Applications for funding should be made via the form on the website.

Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy

by Molly Allsop, Age UK

Supporting people in the community living with dementia is a big part of what we do at Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

As part of the increased support we are offering, we are running a course of Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MCST) for mild to moderate dementia.

The sessions will be taking place weekly on a Wednesday from 10am-12noon over a 26-week period, beginning on 1st June.

Update on Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) - Airband

By Michael Porter

As you will have seen in the media, the Government has committed to the rollout of full fibre broadband (also known as Fibre to the Premise - FTTP) across the UK. For economic reasons the rollout is focused initially on areas of high population density (towns and cities) which means that rural areas may not see full fibre installations for several years.

Currently properties in Birlingham receive their broadband connection through Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC). The connection from the telephone exchange to the cabinet by the church is through a fibre optic cable. However the connection from the cabinet to your property is via the old copper telephone cables. This limits the speed of the connection and its reliability depending on distance from the cabinet. Full Fibre (FTTP) offers an alternative to the copper telephone wires by connecting your property to the cabinet by fibre optic cable. This gives much higher speeds and improved reliability which will future-proof connections as data and bandwidth requirements continue to increase. With many more people working from home internet speed has become an important consideration for people buying a house and websites such as Right Move quote speeds as part of the key information about a property for sale.

After several Birlingham residents expressed interest in getting full fibre broadband, the Parish Council invited other residents to register their interest and some 65 properties did so and were added to a list. The Parish Council then decided to investigate whether a community project could be set up under the Government's Gigabit Voucher Scheme. This scheme was introduced to help rural communities get full fibre much earlier than the general rollout. Discussions took place with two companies who could install the full fibre infrastructure funded through the vouchers. These were Openreach and Airband. After lengthy discussions and an initial quote, Openreach were unable to resource the project. As a result a potential project was concluded with Airband who are actively installing full fibre in several other local villages (Bricklehampton, Cropthorne, Eckington, Elmley Castle, Fladbury and Wick) through the Gigabit Voucher Scheme.

A sufficient number of voucher applications from Birlingham were received by Airband and activated with the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) by the deadline on Friday 8th April so there is now a live scheme to install FTTP in Birlingham. Residents are encouraged to register their interest on the Airband website at <A>https://www.airband.co.uk/</A>. Doing so involves no contractual obligation and takes just a few minutes.

The next steps in the process will be confirmation of procurement by DCMS and an evaluation of the project by Airband, which involves a full costing of the infrastructure required, which in turn determines the number of residents or businesses that will have to sign up for the project to get a final green light. Airband will then get in touch with the representatives on the Parish Council, with a view to arranging a meeting in the Village Hall to promote the scheme and answer questions; this is likely to be scheduled in June. The viability of the scheme depends on sufficient vouchers being activated but based on the level of interest shown in Birlingham (already over 60 households) it is likely to proceed. Initial views are that installation will not take place before the beginning of 2023.

Some answers to likely questions are set out below:

Q *As a resident of Birlingham am I eligible for a voucher?*
A Yes, now that there is an active scheme each household or business can obtain a voucher for £1,500 or £3,500 respectively in terms of contribution to the cost of the scheme. Businesses should check whether this could incur a VAT liability.

Q *How much will it cost?*
A Airband offers four different contracts based on different speeds of service as shown below. Each 18 month contract is at a fixed rate and no increases in prices occur during the contract.

Speed Download / Upload (Mbps)	100 / 25	250 / 50	500 /100	900 / 200
Standard Airband rates (monthly)	£30	£37	£55	£75

For comparison purposes it is worth noting that BT charges £29.99 for 100 Mbps and £39.99 for 300Mbps download speeds, and Sky's packages cost £28 for 59 / 16 Mbps, £35 for 145 / 27 Mbps and £55 for 900 / 90 Mbps.

Q *Am I going to be forced to switch to Airband once the infrastructure is installed?*
A No. The copper telephone wires will not be removed so you can remain with your existing Fibre to the Cabinet service with your chosen ISP. Obviously you will therefore not benefit from faster speeds and more reliable service available through a full fibre installation from Airband. The Government's digital strategy may eventually result in the abandonment of copper, but only once the country is covered by fibre.

Q D*o I have to switch to Airband as my ISP (Internet Service Provider)if I want FTTP?*
A Yes, Airband unlike BT owns the infrastructure and is the ISP. BT's broadband operations were split into BT and BT Openreach some years ago and Openreach provides only the infrastructure through which multiple ISPs offer a full fibre service. Openreach failed to respond in time to our approaches so the team working on this project decided to pursue the opportunity with Airband. However it is important to understand that after an initial 18 month period, Airband will then open up its infrastructure so at that point you will have a choice of ISP's.

Q *I have a fixed term contract with my ISP do I have to break it to receive FTTP?*
A Everyone should expect to stay with their existing ISP service until the service is available. At this point we just need people to sign up for the voucher, in order to secure the project. Airband will need a good proportion of the premises in the village to commit to signing up at least for an initial contract period of 18 months. If you are still in contract with your ISP when the Airband service becomes available then Airband will buy you out of your existing contract (see below) allowing you to switch to FTTP.

Q *Will I incur penalties on my existing contract?*
A This will depend on your current ISP and your contract terms, however Airband will buy out existing contracts. If your contract comes to an end before the Airband infrastructure is installed it makes sense to simply remain out of contract. Also note that as the scheme is Government funded, Airband is required to allow other ISPs access to their infrastructure after the initial 18 month contract period.

Continued on next page

FTTP Q&A (contd.)

Q *Is Airband a sound company?*
A Airband has recently raised £100M in new financing and although a relatively smaller and younger company than BT or Sky there should be no cause for concern. If the company fails for any reason the infrastructure would be taken over by BT Openreach or another service provider because it is Government funded. Airband like BT, Sky and other providers is regulated by OFCOM.

Q *How good is Airband?*
A The company has been operating for 13 years and is quite highly rated on Trust Pilot (4.0 out of 5). Airband has several projects on the go in nearby villages at the moment; among them are projects in Eckington, Cropthorne, Elmley Castle, Fladbury, Bricklehampton and Wick. They are set to become a leading ISP in the rural area around Pershore.

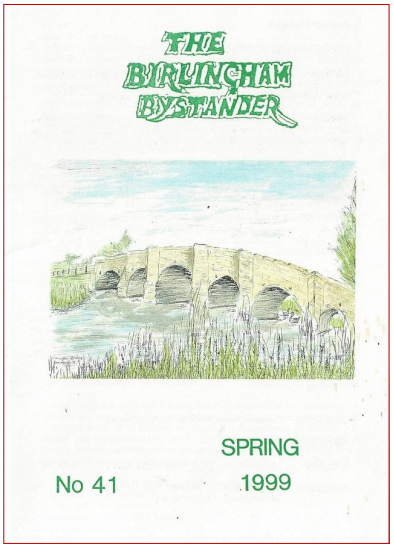
Q *If I sign up for FTTP can I change my mind?*
A After signing with Airband there is a 30 day cooling off period after which you are committed for a period of 18 months. At the end of this you can revert to the standard copper cable based provision as the existing infrastructure will remain installed. However, the Government plans to switch all telephone services to a digital platform meaning that copper cables have a limited shelf life and may not be maintained in the future.

Q *Can I keep my existing landline and telephone number?*
A Yes, although you would need to work out with your provider the cost of a landline only deal, if you switch to Airband.

Personal Ads

Personal adverts should consist of one paragraph of text, maximum 100 words, and will be included in a single issue of Birlingham News. Please note that advertisement text will be published exactly as received. Personal ads should be sent to news@birlingham.org no later than the Monday before publication. Birlingham News is published on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

Bystander Archives



The Spring 1999 edition of the *Birlingham Bystander* reports the usual range of activities over the previous six months, including Chris Hermon performing at a Sixties Night, Wallie Wood planting trees at the Gun Club and a Bulb Sunday packed with music and readings. Plans for the Millennium celebrations were well advanced.

Phil Mackenzie writes about the life of a district judge and the Gwen Finch Wetland Reserve was making progress. Articles from abroad include a cycle ride in Cuba (can anyone name the author?) and a letter from Ian Dawes in Australia.

Guy Olden was christened, Monica and Norman Wild celebrated their ruby wedding and, among others, Simon and Judith Ford are welcomed to the village, with a late welcome for Chris and Rosanna Reynard. Obituaries include Phyllis Woodward, Chris Warton and Bernard Hancock.

Issue 41 of the *Bystander* can be viewed at:
www.birlingham.org/village/bystander/issues/bystander040.pdf

Letters to the Editors

We welcome brief letters to the Editors on any subject relating to Birlingham. The Editors reserve the right to shorten letters and we cannot guarantee that all letters will be printed.

Please send letters to:

news@birlingham.org

Dates for your diary

May

Sun 15	Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church
Wed 18	Birlingham Parish Council Annual Meeting, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall, followed by Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm

June

Wed 1	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Fri 3	Platinum Jubilee – Quiz Night, 7.30pm, Village Marquee, Whitehall Lane
Sat 4	Platinum Jubilee – Street Party, 3.00–5.00pm
	Platinum Jubilee – Children's Pudding Fit for a Queen competition
Sun 5	Platinum Jubilee Celebratory Service, 10.30am, St James' Church
	Platinum Jubilee – Pram Race, 12.00pm, St James' Church
	Platinum Jubilee – Treasure Hunt (venue/time to be confirmed)
Sun 19	Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church

Birlingham News online is available at www.birlingham.org. Details of future editions will be emailed to subscribers of *Birlingham News*. These emails are available to residents of Birlingham, their families and friends. If you know anyone who would like to receive these emails, or have any comments or items for inclusion in either the email or online edition of *Birlingham News*, or wish to be removed from the mailing list, please write to news@birlingham.org.

Birlingham News online is open to any organisation or business within the parish to promote events. Inclusion of an event does not imply that Birlingham Jubilee Committee supports either the event or the views of the organisation promoting it.

The copy date for the next edition is Sunday 22nd May (for publication on Wednesday 25th May). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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