Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 317/8 Wednesday 22nd November 2023

Editorial

Since the 17th century, public rights of access to land have gradually become eroded. From the 1750s, enclosures by parliamentary Act became the norm and overall, between 1604 and 1914, more than 5,200 enclosure Bills were enacted by Parliament. The Bills related to just over a fifth of the total area of England, amounting to some 6.8 million acres.

These Acts enclosed open fields and common land in the countryside, creating legal property rights to land that was previously considered common. Since then, we have had our right to roam freely across the land gradually further restricted.

Here in Birlingham, we are lucky to live in a large, sparsely-populated village with a degree of free movement, allowing us to experience the open countryside.

We have a good network of footpaths, diligently maintained for many years by our Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward, with assistance from Mark Smith. (A map of the footpaths is shown on a later page.) We also have a number of permissive paths, courtesy of Revills Farm.

In addition, we have two areas of registered common land, Asham Meadow and Birlingham Quay at Swan's Neck (also shown on the map). Anyone is entitled to visit these areas at any time without restriction.

However, as many communities have discovered to their cost, these open access areas can be wiped out in an instant if they are not jealously guarded. It is up to all of us, both those who wish to spend time in the open countryside and those who farm the land, to protect these fragile rights and ensure they can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

In recent weeks, alterations have been made to the area previously thought of as 'the Quay'. Much of that area has now been fenced off and is due to be planted with trees. The reasons for these controversial actions are explained later in this newsletter, and we have 'before and after' photographs plus a letter from a resident. We welcome further views on these changes at news@birlingham.org.

We should all play a part, no matter how small, in preserving our rights. In the words of William Morris, 'We are only the trustees for those who come after us.'

Cuppa & Chat



Wednesday 6th December *by Sue Hermon*

Cuppa & Chat will be held on Wednesday 6th December from 3.00 to 4.30pm in Birlingham Village Hall. Everyone is most welcome to come along to our seasonal gathering to help get us into the Christmas spirit!

There will be tea, coffee, cake, mince pies, sausage rolls and more plus a glass of mulled wine and the cost is still only £2.50 per head!

A raffle of prizes provided by Cuppa & Chat will round off the afternoon, with proceeds going to the Midlands Air Ambulance. This is such a worthwhile cause, your support will be much appreciated.

Hope to see you on the 6th!

For more information, or to request transport, please contact me on 01386 750096 or email sue.hermon@me.com.

St James' Church



Churchwarden: Adrianne Woodward
(Tel. 01386 750936)

Services at St James' Church during December will be held at the following times:

* **Sunday 17th**: Carols and Christingles Service, 6.00pm (led by Peter Stansbie).

  This service retells the Christmas story with contributions from all ages and is followed by mulled wine or soft drinks with seasonal picks in the Village Hall.

* **Monday 25th**: Christmas Day Holy Communion, 10.30am (led by Bishop Michael Hooper)

  This is the second service that Bishop Michael has kindly taken for us and will be a fitting start to your Christmas Day celebrations.



Defibrillator Access Code

by Ken Fitch

Birlingham has an automatic defibrillator contained in a secure box attached to the wall of the Village Hall to the right of the main entrance. With the defibrillator are the pads, both adult and child versions, and detailed instructions.

Initially all houses were sent a fridge magnet showing the access code. It has now become apparent that some of these fridge magnets have been lost/misplaced; therefore the access code is contained below.

Access code: **C1234**

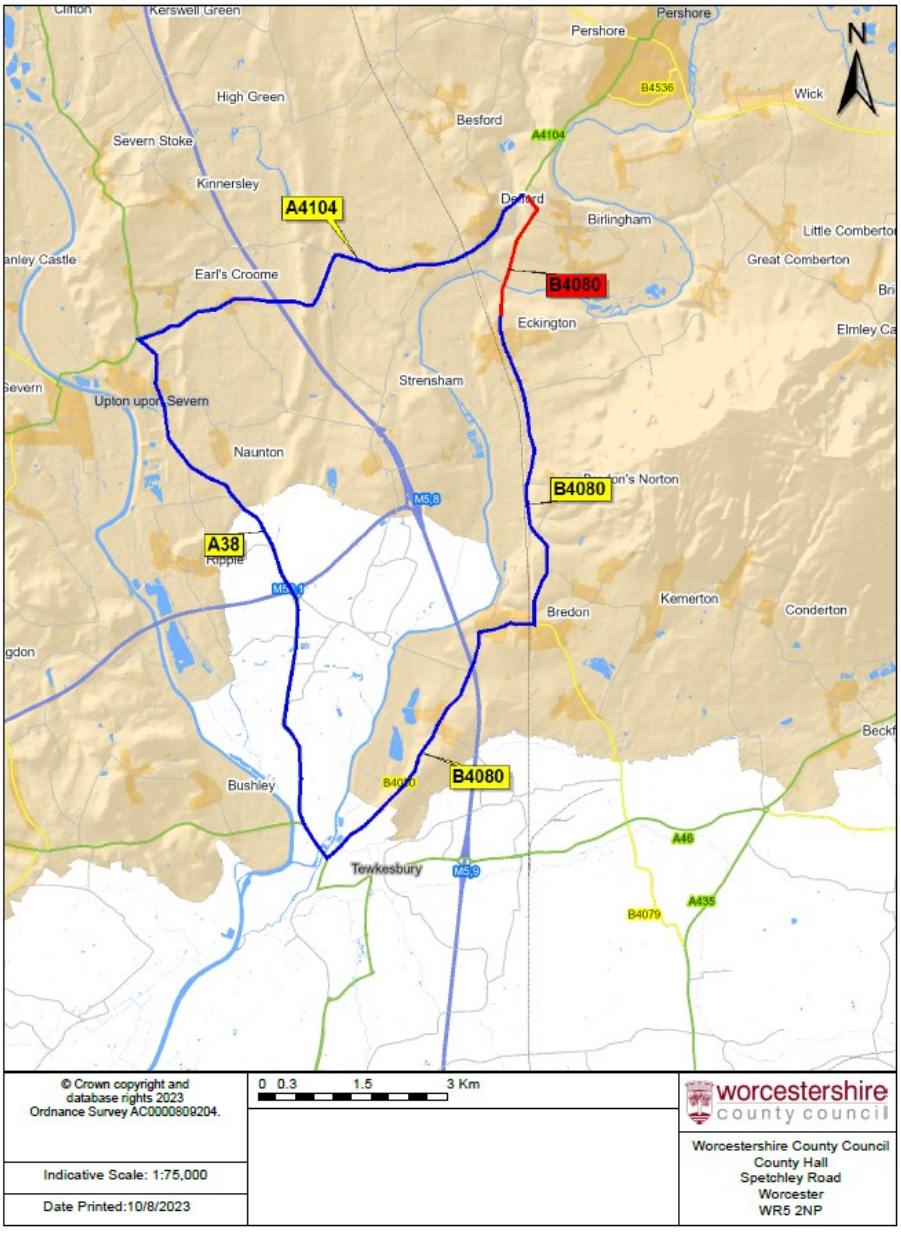
Road Closure – Eckington Road

The B4080, from the junction with the A4104 Pershore-Defford road, at the top of Bakers Hill, to Monkhall Hill in Eckington will be closed for three days between 4th and 22nd December. This is to allow for carriageway patching. The precise dates of the closure have not been specified.

The notice of closure is given opposite and the diversion map is below.

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
PUBLIC NOTICE
Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
(B4080 Eckington Road, Birlingham) (Temporary Closure) Order 2023
Proposed Order: to close that part of B4080 Eckington Road from its junction with A4104 Bakers Hill to its junction with Monkhall Hill (Private).
Reason: Carriageway patching by WCC.
Exemptions: to permit access to any land or premises fronting the highway affected where there is no other form of access; and to allow the works to be undertaken.
Alternative route: B4080 Pershore Road, B4080 Church Street, B4080 Tewkesbury Road, B4080 Eckington Road, B4080 Main Road, B4080 Tewkesbury Road, A38 Mythe Road (Gloucestershire), A38 Tewkesbury Road, A4104 Pershore Road, A4104 Defford Road and vice versa.
Maximum duration: 18 Months. Anticipated duration: **3 days between 4 December and 22 December 2023.**
Thomas Pollock Head of Commercial Law (Legal & Governance) County Hall Spetchley Road Worcester
9 November 2023

1490132 -1- B4080 Eckington Road, Birlingham
Richard Lane CA48456



Eckington Stores

Shop locally from our large range of products:

- Grocery and household items
- Bread and milk
- Ham, cheese, bacon and eggs
- Fruit and vegetables
- Newspapers and magazines
- Frozen food and ice cream
- Alcohol and cold drinks
- Confectionary

We are agents for:

- The National Lottery
- My Hermes Parcelshop

Please pop in to see our full range of products

John, Sue and Mark
Tel 01386 750266

Parish Council Report

by Ian Yates

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting at 7.00pm on Wednesday 15th November in the Village Hall.

- **Airband - Full Fibre Broadband (Fibre to the Premise)**
  Residents will have noticed lots of activity in Birlingham and the surrounding area as fibre infrastructure is installed. The Parish Council has received an update from Airband; Pershore, Wick, the Combertons and Eckington are now completed. Defford will be completed by Christmas and Birlingham by February (estimated) at which point testing and connections can take place. There have been some delays due to Airband having to apply for a road closure at Upper End to install six poles to bring the cable into the village from the A4104 to near Hills Cottage. Councillor Porter met with Airband on Wednesday 15th November to discuss the poles and asked as an alternative that they bury the cable either in ducts where they currently exist or in the verge adjacent to land owned by him and his brother. This would be a much-preferred solution and is being considered. It is expected that the majority of the village will be covered by the new fibre service but residents can check individual properties via this link:
  https://www.airband.co.uk/broadband-coverage-checker/
  and then also register their interest if they haven't already done so.
  A resident attended the Parish Council meeting to ask questions about the installation near their property and the Chair has been in contact with Airband to get answers for them.

- **Defibrillator code**
  A resident attended the Parish Council meeting to raise a concern regarding access to the defibrillator code in an emergency. They wanted reassurance that on dialling 999 the code would be available via the emergency service. Contact was made with the British Heart Foundation who re-confirmed that the defibrillator is registered and that the code should be available via 999. However, personal experience suggests this is not always the case. Residents have previously been issued with fridge magnets showing the code and an article will be written for Birlingham News reminding residents of the information. A discussion will be held with the Birlingham Village Hall Committee regarding whether the defibrillator should be left unlocked in future.

- **Parish Council Warden reports**
  The reports are given in a separate item on the next page.

- **District Councillor's Report – Paul Middlebrough**
  A full copy of his report will be included in the Minutes. However, here is a short summary:

  ◊ Paul has been appointed to the Executive Board as member for Town and Rural Vitality. Responsibilities are for: smart growth working with developers and the public realm; support and initiate projects in Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore; support cross-border development opportunities; support and initiate projects to strengthen rural communities. This new role means he has stood down as a member of the Planning Committee. However, he can still speak at Planning Committee meetings on local applications.

  ◊ Wychavon's Budget process for 2024/2025 has already started at Wychavon. The initial planning process is proposing to increase expenditure budgets by 5% in 2024/25 with an increase in fees and charges of 3%. In addition to this, further efficiency gains and removal of any excess budgets will continue.

  ◊ The South Worcestershire Development Plan Review has been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public. It is expected/hoped Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District councils will be able to adopt the Plan in late 2024.

- **Planning**
  Several planning applications and enforcement cases in Birlingham were discussed so that comments agreed could be sent to the LPA at Wychavon. The application at Orchard Farm, Defford Road, Pershore for 300 new houses next to Tiddesley Wood (W/23/02112) was also discussed. This development is outside our parish boundary. However, the size of the development could impact local infrastructure such as roads, schools and GP surgeries. Worcestershire Wildlife is also very concerned about the impact on Tiddesley Wood SSSI. See:
  https://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/our-position-proposed-orchard-farm-development
  It was noted that there were no comments or objections to the development on the planning site from Birlingham residents, so no additional comments will be sent by the Parish Council at this time.

- **2024/25 Budget and Precept**
  The Parish Council discussed the budget for 2024/25 which sets the precept for the year. It is hoped that, when finalised, charges can be kept at the same level as 2023/24 or even reduced a little.

- **Water leak on the road by the Manor House, Lower End**
  Despite considerable work being carried out to address this problem earlier in the year, and over the previous nine years, water continues to pour across the road, and this will become a hazard when it freezes. The Clerk has attempted to resolve the problem with Severn Trent and will escalate it working with Councillor Byrne.

- **Remembrance**
  There was an excellent turnout in sunny weather for the remembrance service by the war memorial on Saturday 11th November. Councillor Porter read out the names and Councillor Yates laid the wreath. The Eckington service was held on Sunday 12th and veteran Ian Moore from Lilac Cottage kindly agreed to lay the wreath on behalf of the Parish.

- **Swan's Neck replanting**
  On Monday 6th November, the Parish Council had a discussion with Revills about their plans for tree planting at Swan's Neck. Concerns were raised over the loss of access to part of the grassed area at Birlingham Quay due to planned new fencing. It was agreed that the farm would open up the common access area at the quay which had become overgrown and inaccessible. Work started the same day with the removal of the old pump house followed by clearance in preparation for planting. In order to keep residents informed as soon as possible, a report by John Sansome was published in a special edition of *Birlingham News* last week with details and a map.

Parish Council Warden Reports

by Ian Yates

The Footpath Warden, Bruce Hayward, reported that the Broadwalk Causeway is to be repaired. This is located on footpath 508(B) between Gravelly Hill and Defford [*see map below*].

The Tree Warden, Rupert Day, reported three trees of immediate concern that need attention:

- The lime tree at the corner of Upper End on the inside of the bend
- The sycamore on the corner of the Avenue and Church Lane
- A yew tree halfway up the Avenue

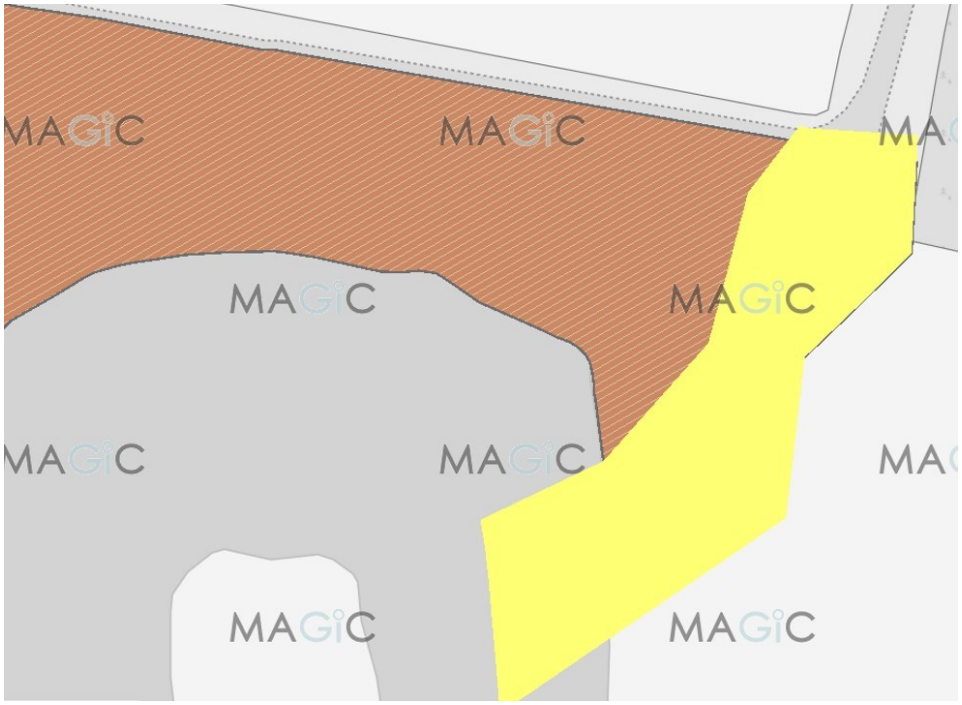
Also along Church Lane there are a number of dead trees between the cricket ground and the road and on the side of the road where Church Lane turns back towards the village green. The tree warden and clerk will be contacting landowners about these.

The Lengthsman, Carl Brassington, reported that there was a lot of mud from tractors on Broadway Road and the Clerk will contact the farm about getting this cleaned up.



Swan's Neck

by John Sansome



Tree planting at Swan's Neck will begin over the next few weeks, establishing what will become, over the years, a new wood by the river. Approximately 350 trees will be planted in the area shown in brown on the attached map (from Magic Maps). The saplings of common alder, common oak, small-leaved lime, downy birch and bird cherry will be clearly defined (and protected) by an encircling fence.

The Farm met with Avon Navigation Trust and established that over the years Birlingham Quay (where narrowboats regularly moor) has shifted along the river bank to where it now lies in the curve of the river. Some of this land is owned by the farm but with the agreement of the Trust the mooring will still be accessible by a two metre strip along the bank of the river. The Trust will oversee the upkeep of the quay and the memorial bench will be moved to where the Trust notice currently stands.

The area shown yellow on the attached map is open access land and has, over the years, become overgrown and inaccessible. The Farm agreed to clear the undergrowth and open the area up so that it can be enjoyed. The public continue to be welcome to linger at the quay to enjoy the view and use the more clearly marked public footpath which runs alongside the new woodland. The old pump house has now been removed.



Above: Facing east, before fencing, 10th November
(Photos: Julia Luff)



Above: Facing east, after fencing, 15th November
(Photos: Ian Yates)

Below: View from the track, before fencing, 10th November



Below: View from the track, after fencing, 15th November



The Quay, Swan's Neck



Facing west, after fencing, 15th November
(Photo: Ian Yates)



Facing west, 17th November
(Photo: Ann Maxwell)

A Growing Tide of Barbed Wire

Birlingham is a small village with a small population. We buy our houses because they are in the heart of the countryside. We expect to hear a cockerel crow, a dog to bark, a horse to clip clop past, the church bells to ring, the farm vehicles to squash us into the hedge. In return we wish to enjoy the surrounding farmland, not stare at it over a barbed wire fence. Apart from Birlingham people, there aren't hoards tramping around, apart from a few Eckington residents running or walking the big loop. It doesn't take long to recognise most people visiting the village.

Walking to Swan's Neck has been a delight for many people for generations. This bend on the meandering river is beautiful, the flow of the water is intriguing, and there is a sense of peace. The meander is so perfect, the swans are so white and regal, and the popping of fish on a summer's evening a reminder of how close we are still to nature. It is a favourite mooring for narrowboats throughout the season, the crew sitting in the stern with a drink, enjoying the sheltered view of the river, grazing sheep and Bredon Hill.

Now the area has been 'tidied up', some overgrowth cut back and opened up, hopefully to be seeded, but the woodland is fenced off with an aggressive barbed wire fence, the through walk blocked. Densely planted trees promise an impenetrable wood in years to come, and the short corridor between the mooring and the public footpath will feel very narrow between high trees and barbed wire. If you walk to the river, the view is now impaired by the vast Navigation Trust sign which dominates the middle of the open area. If a boat is moored up, the view is further blocked, and if you linger you will feel you are intruding on the narrowboat's privacy. Go and look for yourself – but don't trip up over the mooring ropes if a narrowboat is alongside, or perhaps form an orderly queue if there is anyone else there at the same time?

Of course, Revills are allowed to do what they have done. It is their land and they can argue the dense tree planting is all the fault of the Forestry Commission, who, they claim, demand that the farm plant a certain number of trees as a condition of the felling licence for the large poplars. On the other hand, and despite the farm management's abrasive style of communications with the village (which smack of Meghan Markle truths!), with just a little thought they could surely have changed things for the better if they had wanted to.

We understand that there must be some give and take between our interests and those of the farm. Sadly, a growing tide of new fences, gates, no entry signs and barbed wire is encroaching on us. Why does the farm appear to be so set on making us all feel we are inconsequential to them? Are we such small motes of dust? Why is it increasingly difficult to enjoy our surroundings? If the farm could only consider diplomacy, an understanding of how villagers think and feel, it would be appreciated. But this two fingers up to the community is unpleasant.

Julia Luff

BORDER IN A BOX

Christmas Gift Shop

on

Saturday 25th November

at

Birlingham Village Hall

10am to 1pm

Cards, Cash & Phone payments accepted



Rainbow over RedStar fields, 8.00am, 9th November
(Photo: Julia Luff)

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

Planning Applications

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

The Grange, Grange Road: Proposed single storey orangery with roof terrace and single storey link (Case No. W/23/01919/HP). Awaiting decision by Wychavon District Council. (Consultation period ends on 14th December.) Full details can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at:

https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/23/01919/HP



The Pigsty Holiday Cottage

Marian Kirkland

The Pigsty
Lower End
Birlingham
Worcestershire
WR10 3AD

Tel: 07723 923420

Bookings are now being taken for newly renovated cottage

Please contact Marian:
mariankirkland123@gmail.com

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.

LOCAL FINANCIAL PLANNERS

PK Prosser Knowles



In an uncertain and complex world, you need your finances to be made **straightforward and secure**. At Prosser Knowles, we do just that. We provide personal, face-to-face financial planning and wealth management services designed to help you gain control of your finances, protect your loved ones and **achieve your goals**.

Some of the services available from us include:

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- Inheritance Tax Planning
- Trust & Estate Planning
- Offshore Investments
- Life Assurance
- Long Term Care
- Mortgages & Equity Release

Financial security is important whatever stage of life you are at. From your first steps onto the housing ladder, to retirement and later life planning, we'll deliver **peace of mind** and a plan for the future at every step.

If you feel that a complimentary initial consultation with one of our experienced advisers would be beneficial to you, please contact us on **01452 260 840** or **01905 619 100 or** you can e-mail **enquiries@prosserknowles.co.uk**

For more information visit: www.prosserknowles.co.uk

Dates for your diary

November

Sat 25	Border in a Box Christmas Gift Shop, 10.00am–1.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall

December

Wed 6	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 17	Carols and Christingles, 6.00pm, St James' Church
Thu 21	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Mon 25	Christmas Day Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church

January

Wed 3	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Wed 17	Birlingham Parish Council, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Thu 18	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall

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 Monday 11th December (for publication on Wednesday 13th December). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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