Birlingham News online

Published on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month

No. 375 Wednesday 25th March 2026

Editorial



Just over four years ago, we decided to experiment with an online version of *Birlingham News*. Since then the online edition has evolved and ultimately replaced the original text-based emails that preceded it.

We are now pleased to be celebrating our 100th edition of *Birlingham News*. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who have contributed news, articles and photographs, which have made this publication so popular.

We have had a particular influx of photographs of local scenes in the last two weeks and we are pleased to be able to show you some of these as part of our celebration.

Of course, we always want more! So if you have any news, views or photos that you would like to share, let us know.

Meanwhile, we are awaiting a telegram from the King . . .

Thank You from Carl

by Carl Brassington

I would like to thank everyone for all the good wishes that I have received since my retirement. It seems a bit strange not to be in hi-viz quite so much but I'm still around.

It has been a privilege to meet you all and share in life's ups and downs but now I am busier than ever doing nothing in particular, which is taking up all of my free time, so don't even think of bothering me again.

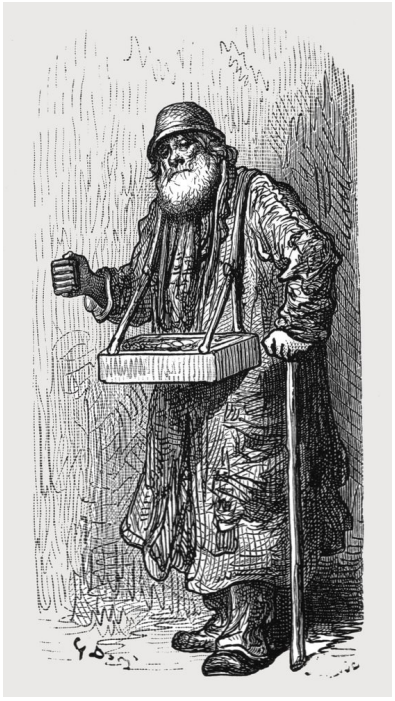
Thank you everyone and have a peaceful and fulfilling life.

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Guy Fawkes says, 'I recommend Spotter's.'



Carl in retirement

St James' Church

Churchwardens: Adrianne Woodward & Pat Chinneck (Tel. 01386 750936)



There will be an Easter Sunday Holy Communion service on Sunday 5th April at 10.30am. The service will be led by Revd Jayne Parker and will be followed by refreshments.

Dates for the Diary

Spring Walk around Birlingham, Sunday 17th May, 3.00pm

Cuppa & Chat

Wednesday 1st April

by Sue Hermon



The next Cuppa & Chat will be held just before Easter on Wednesday 1st April from 3.00pm to 4.30pm in Birlingham Village Hall. Everyone is most welcome to come along.

There will be tea, coffee and a selection of cakes and the cost is still only £3.00 per head, which includes a chance to win the mystery prize, which may well be Easter related!

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

Birlingham Village Hall

100th Annual General Meeting to be held on

Monday 30th March 2026 at 7.00pm

at Birlingham Village Hall

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 99th Annual General Meeting held on 24th March 2025
3. Treasurer's report
4. Annual Report (Secretary from minutes)
5. Election of Trustees

Trustees to stand down and be re-elected

KF, DG, VG, WY, PB

Churchyard Tidy-up

Saturday 18th April *by Pat Chinneck & Sue Hayward*

The first churchyard tidy-up of 2026 will be held on Saturday 18th April at 10.00am. There will be lots of jobs to do so your help will be very much appreciated. Some tree work has been done recently, which has created opportunities to work further in these areas. However, we have jobs for all ages and abilities, whether you are a keen gardener or not.

If you have loppers, secateurs, trowels and rakes please bring them along but we will have some you can borrow too. We usually spend about two hours tidying and then stop for a welcome brew and a piece of cake. It's an enjoyable morning, spent in the fresh air – why not give it a try!

Lengthsman Retirement

by Ian Yates,
Birlingham Parish Council Chair

Carl Brassington, our lengthsman, decided to retire at the end of December. He has served the village extremely well for more than 15 years and the Parish Council was pleased to present him with a voucher as a small token of our appreciation. I'm sure we would all like to join in wishing him a happy retirement.

Birlingham Parish Council (18th March):
Steven Byrne, June Hiden (Clerk), Paula Aston, Carl Brassington, Ian Yates (Chair), David Glover



Pershore Public Transport Forum

Saturday 11th April

by Julian Palfrey

Local transport campaigners Vale Bus and Rail have arranged a Public Transport Forum at Pershore Town Hall, High Street, Pershore on Saturday 11th April from 10.00am until 12.00.

The forum is aimed at increasing public awareness of existing timetabled bus services in the Pershore area and improving publicity and promotion to help boost usage.

Vale Bus and Rail (VBR) is also urging Worcestershire County Council as public transport authority to update and improve neglected services such as the Pershore PlumLine and Village Hopper buses (the Pershore PlumLine timetable has now been unchanged for 12 years). Measures proposed include simplifying over-complicated timetables, improving customer information and facilities, and developing minimal cost improvements through re-timings and making better use of existing manpower and resources.

VBR is also dedicated to better co-ordination and integration of services and much improved bus/rail links.

We would very much welcome the views of members of the public regarding issues with their local bus services and would like to invite representatives from your council to the meeting. Invitations are also being sent to the County Council's public transport team, bus operators and local county and district councillors.

We also welcome local residents and we do hope that you will be able to join us on the 11th.

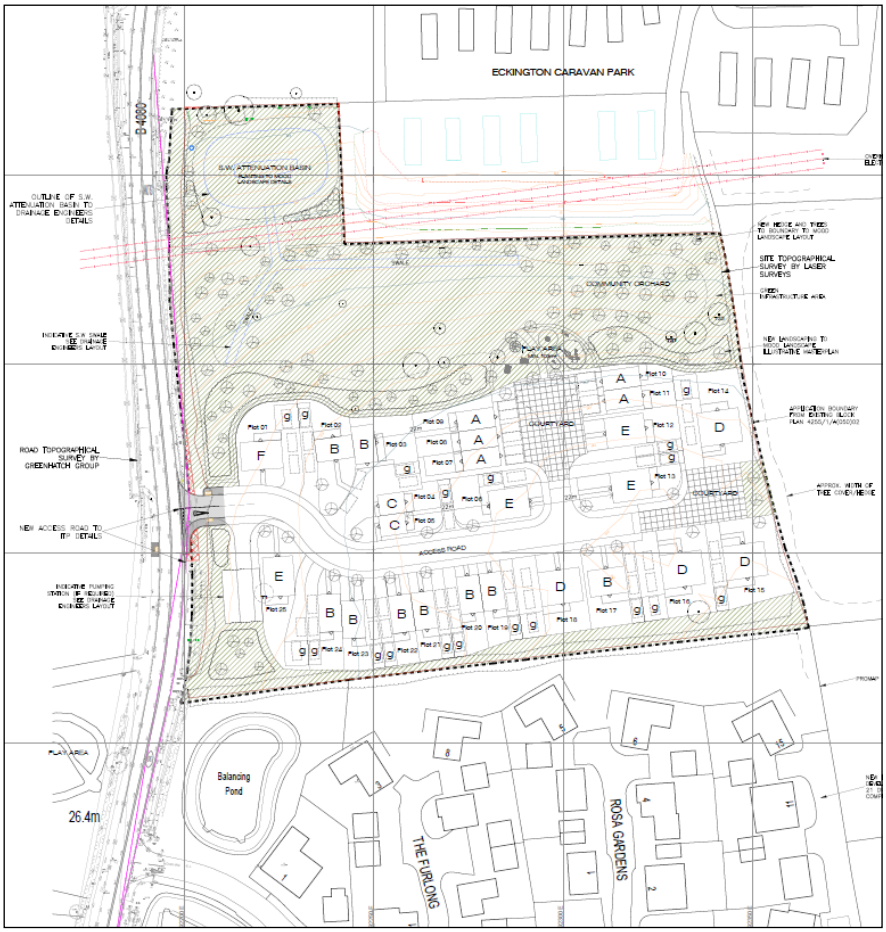
Planning Application, Eckington

We have been asked to publicise an outline planning application for 25 houses on Pershore Road, south of Birlingham.

It is believed that this application will have an impact on the view from Asham Meadow and nearby properties. Although the caravan park by the river is largely hidden by trees, this development on the field directly above is likely to be highly visible.

The application can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at:
https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/26/00016/OUT

Public consultation ends on 11th April.



St James' Church, Birlingham

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE



SUNDAY 5 APRIL
1030
ST JAMES' CHURCH

Join us on Easter Sunday for a special
Holy Communion service, led by Revd Jayne Parker,
followed by refreshments.

Parish Council Report

by Ian Yates

Birlingham Parish Council held its meeting at 7.00pm on Wednesday 18th January in the Village Hall. A summary of agenda items follows:

- **Lengthsman Retirement**

  Carl Brassington, our lengthsman, decided to retire at the end of December. He has served the village extremely well for more than 15 years and the Parish Council was pleased to present him with a voucher as a small token of our appreciation. (See separate article above.)

- **New Lengthsman**

  We are pleased to announce that Kevin LeMarechal has agreed to become our new lengthsman. Kevin studied Horticulture at Pershore College and before becoming self-employed he managed a nursery for RA Meredith and Sons. He lives in Overbury but knows Birlingham well, having done gardening work for several residents. He will be taking some statutory training during late March and early April so should be able to start shortly after that. In the meantime, he has also agreed to help out with maintenance of the churchyard.

- **Thank-yous to Worcester County Council's Adrian Hardman**

  Sue Hermon (Cuppa & Chat), Karen Crowther (Arts Group) and Caryl Mills (IW) attended the meeting to thank Adrian Hardman for his on-going financial support for their groups. Grants of between £250 and £300 per group have been received, which are an important contribution to running costs, allowing the groups to continue while maintaining prices.

- **Planning**

  There has been a large number of comments from villagers concerning planning application W/26/00163/PIP for 5-9 dwellings on land at Eckington Road, Birlingham. These were all submitted before the 10th March deadline.

  Councillors briefly reviewed the status with Wychavon District Councillor Paul Middlebrough and Becca Garle who heads up the Birlingham resident's planning group. The application is still pending.

  However, the South Worcestershire Development Plan has now been formally signed off by the planning Inspector. This plan demonstrates a 5-year residential land supply plus an additional 5% surplus/margin. This Plan should be adopted by the local authorities during the week commencing 23rd March 2026. As a result, the Parish Council submitted a supplementary comment on 19th March as we consider this to be a substantive material consideration, and that the applicant's assertion that 'the Local Authority having not proved in public that it has a 5-year housing land supply' is now incorrect.

- **Report from District Councillor Paul Middlebrough**

  See separate item below.

- **Presentation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)**

  As referenced in Councillor Paul Middlebrough's report (see next page), the Parish Council was invited to comment on the LGR. There are two options under consideration:

  ◊ One Worcestershire – a single unitary authority currently supported by Worcester County Council and Wyre Forest DC. Their proposal can be found here:

  One Worcestershire Proposal.

  ◊ Transforming Worcestershire – two authorities, one in the North and one in the South of Worcestershire, currently supported by District Councils in Bromsgrove, Malvern, Redditch, Wychavon and Worcester City Council. Their proposal can be found here:

  LGR - Transforming Worcestershire FINAL 27.11.25 REDUCED1.pdf.

  We are grateful to Paul Middlebrough who gave us a talk on *Transforming Worcester* and Councillor Adam Kent Conservative Group Leader at WCC and Birlingham resident who did the same for *One Worcestershire*.

- **Addressing concerns over speeding**

  Worcester County Council Highways Department has agreed to repaint the roundels in Upper End and on New Barn Road, as soon as the weather improves sufficiently.

- **Community Initiatives**

  Following feedback from the questionnaire that was sent out at the end of 2025 a number of ideas have been discussed for the £1543 CIL funding that is available. Some have been eliminated as not required at this time (new village marquee). Others were impractical (restoration of sign post, pickleball equipment) and some need further costings (Village Hall sign). Further updates to follow.

- **Parish Council resignation and vacancies**

  As previously reported, Councillor Michael Porter tendered his resignation at the end of the January Parish Council meeting due to a likely conflict of interest over a planning application. Councillors thanked Michael for his time and contribution.

  As a result there are now two vacancies and we would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in being co-opted onto the council. The work is not onerous or very time consuming and it does allow matters that are important to residents to be addressed and dealt with. If you are interested in joining, please contact the Parish Clerk, June Hiden, at birlingham_clerk@yahoo.co.uk or give PC Chair, Ian Yates, a call on 07769 900242 for more details.

Full minutes of the Parish Council meeting will be posted on the village website shortly.

Report from District Councillor Paul Middlebrough

Wychavon Budget

On 25th February Wychavon completed its budget for 2026/2027.

Total revenue spending is £18.5 million and £16.1 million on capital projects.

The key points are:

- Freezing our share of the Council Tax for two years.
- A £5 million support package offering a mixture of grants, free and discounted council services over the next two years.
- £400,000 for a new community grants scheme which will provide smaller grants to help community groups improve their local area.
- Up to £4 million to decarbonise Pershore and Evesham Leisure Centres. (Energy efficiency measures are being installed at Droitwich Spa Leisure Centre as part of the current upgrade.)
- £872,000 to support Wychavon's economy including an extra £412,000 in a new Wychavon Growth Grant and Wychavon Rural Grant to continue to support small and medium-sized businesses across the district with expansion projects.
- £100,000 in grants to support energy efficiency schemes for community buildings and biodiversity improvements for communities.

These are on top of multi-million-pound commitments already made by Wychavon for major regeneration and wellbeing projects, including Evesham Town Centre through redevelopment of the Riverside Shopping Centre site and upgrades to the lido and leisure centre in Droitwich Spa.

Council Tax Bills will be sent out during March. The bills show the following differences since last year:

	% Change
Wychavon	0.0
Worcestershire County Council	9.0
West Mercia Police	5.2
Fire Authority	4.9
Defford & Besford	10.9
Birlingham	**2.3**
Eckington	4.9
Strensham	9.2

South Worcestershire Development Plan (Review)

It is expected that the SWDP(R) will be approved at the end of the month. This should in the short term reduce the need for more housing, though probably not in the medium term as the Government are revising national planning policy to support their wider objectives of building 1.5 million houses.

Throckmorton New Settlement Master planning

The South Worcestershire Councils (SWC), supported by Homes England, wish to undertake further work to produce an innovative, ambitious and deliverable Framework Masterplan that is accompanied by a detailed phasing and delivery plan for Throckmorton New Settlement, building upon the work undertaken to date for the imminent Review of the Plan.

Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's consultation on local government reorganisation in Worcestershire is underway with a closing date of 26th March 2026.

Although the Government for some reason left parish councils off the list of consultees you can of course fill in the forms:

Local government reorganisation in Worcestershire - GOV.UK

Parish council insight matters to us, and we want to ensure your voice is heard during this critical phase of the reorganisation process and that is why in our Transforming Worcestershire recommendation we promoted the voice of Town and Parish Councils being an essential part of democracy in the South Worcestershire unitary authority.

The Government will probably announce which approach, Two Unitaries or One Unitary, before their summer recess.

At the same time the Government is moving forward with its powers for devolved arrangements, introducing an elected mayor to oversee local transport and skills, as well as being responsible for delivering other services. Firmly committed to mayoral devolution, the government is advancing its agenda through the devolution priority programme. However, it has emphasised that the model is most successful when based on robust foundations, such as the strong unitary structures being established through local government reorganisation. These reforms are scheduled to be delivered within this parliamentary session.





HAVE YOU EVER WANTED TO RING CHURCH BELLS?

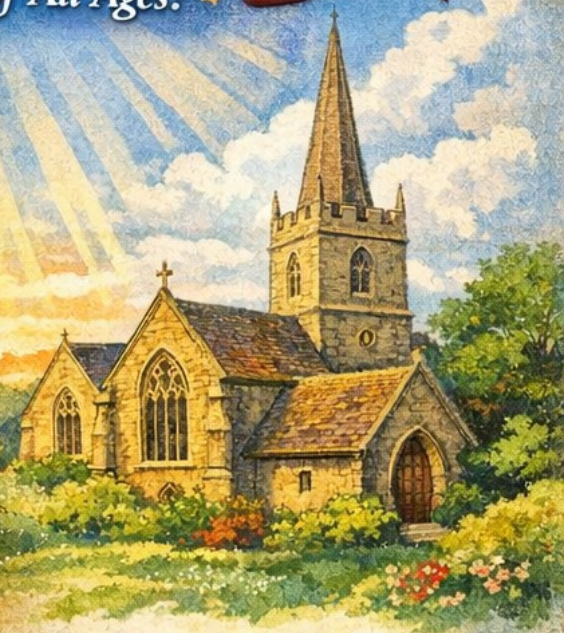
ST JAMES THE GREAT

Join the Bell Ringers of All Ages!

Learn a Skill Like No Other

New Ringers Welcome – All Ages!





NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

Full Training Provided!

You DON'T Need To:

- ✗ Be physically strong
- ✗ Be religious or a regular churchgoer
- ✗ Commit every week

You DO Need To:

- ✓ Climb a ladder
- ✓ Reach the ropes
- ✓ Enjoy a physical activity

What You'll Gain:

- New Friendships
- Traditional Skill
- Support Our Church & Village

PRACTICE EVENINGS

Wednesdays (2nd & 4th of the Month)

COME AND TRY IT!

Contact:

Stuart Allen - *Tower Captain*

✉ stueallen01@gmail.com

✆ 07932 733679



RING FOR TRADITION • RING FOR COMMUNITY • RING FOR FUN

We'd love to welcome you to the tower!

Springtime in Birlingham



An early village run after a frosty night *(Photo: Abigail Hermon)*

Lower End blossom *(Photo: Jayne Mackenzie)*



A good year for mistletoe in Upper End *(Photo: Ann Maxwell)*





(Above) *Virgin balloon landing near Lower End* *(Photo: Peter Luff)*

(Below) *Northern lights? (On a night when the spectacle was expected to be visible 'as far south as Norfolk')* *(Photo: Peter Luff)*





(Above) *Frosty morning and blossom at Lower Farm* *(Photo: Wendy Yates)*

(Below) *Flooding on Bow Brook with Tiddesley Wood in background, seen from Lower Farm in mid-February* *(Photo: Ian Yates)*





(Above) *Cultivating next to Whitehall Lane* *(Photo: Peter Luff)*

(Below) *Deer in Lower End* *(Photo: Jayne Mackenzie)*



(Above) *Red kite over Birlingham* *(Photo: Peter Luff)*

(Below) *Maisie Phelps with retired racehourse on Farm Piece field, next to New Barn Lane, in January* *(Photo: Jane Phelps)*





Planning Applications

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

The Row, Lower End: Re-roofing of outbuildings, to include insertion of ridge beam and additional internal brick gables (Case No. W/25/02611/LB). **Approved**. Full details and conditions can be viewed on the Wychavon DC website at:

https://plan.wychavon.gov.uk/Planning/Display/W/25/02611/LB

The Parish Council comments are available at:

http://www.birlingham.org/pc_info/pc_comments_25_02611.pdf



High-level cleaning with SkyVac machine:

Pat Chinneck has arranged for the SkyVac machine to be on loan from the Diocese for a month and it is being used by all the churches in the benefice including the Abbey. Two weeks ago was Birlingham's turn to use it and it enabled high-level cleaning throughout the church. Apparently it was hard work but very satisfying. Here Stuart Allen is seen using the machine; Denise Nayna was also involved.

(Photo: Pat Chinneck)

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

Personal Ads

Personal adverts should consist of a maximum of 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.

Dates for your diary

March	
Mon 30	Birlingham Village Hall 100th AGM, 7.00pm, Village Hall
April	
Wed 1	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sun 5	Easter Day Holy Communion, 10.30am, St James' Church
Thu 16	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sat 18	Churchyard Tidy-up, 10.00am, St James' Church
Sat 18	Birlingham CC 1st X1 vs Worcester CC 3rd XI, 12.30pm
May	
Wed 4	Cuppa & Chat, 3.00–4.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sat 9	Birlingham CC 1st X1 vs Kington CC 1st XI, 12.30pm
Sun 17	Spring Walk around Birlingham, 3.00pm, St James' Church
Wed 20	Birlingham Annual Parish Meeting, 7.00pm, Birlingham Village Hall (followed by Annual Parish Council Meeting at 7.30pm)
Thu 21	Birlingham IW, 7.30pm, Birlingham Village Hall
Sat 23	Birlingham CC 1st X1 vs Old Elizabethans CC 4th XI, 12.30pm

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 6th April (for publication on Wednesday 8th April). We regret that we cannot guarantee to include any items submitted after that date.

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