

## Berkswell Parish Council - Ordinary meeting 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell held in the Westlake Room, Balsall Common on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 at 7.15 PM.

Item	Topic	Action by
1	<p><b>Open Forum</b></p> <p>Resident Roy Jones of Spencer's Lane addressed the Council with respect to planning application 2016-00263. In summary he stated</p> <p>a) The present barn had not changed its use in 16 years. He felt there was no need for a stockman's dwelling. The need was justified in part by a five year plan but future plans change and the case should be justified on current need.</p> <p>b) The distance from the current farm house is given as 1.5 miles. Mr Jones had driven the distance between the ends of the drives of the current and proposed farm houses. He had been delayed by the traffic lights on the Nailcote lane bridge and it had still taken him only 3 minutes and 40 seconds.</p> <p>c) He had looked at the welfare regulations issued by DEFRA and these called for 2 visits per day. A journey time of 3 minutes and 40 seconds was not excessive in his opinion.</p> <p>d) The applicant states that he was unable to buy lower farm building when he bought the land and gives this as justification for a new house in the same location. Mr Jones stated that in the last 16 years Lower Farm had come up for sale as had several other houses in the locality and the applicant had not purchased one of these to meet the need he claimed for a new house. Nor had he built the stockman's dwelling that he had been given permission to build following an appeal despite similar claims at that time that such a dwelling was essential</p> <p>e) The applicant further claims that the cottage will support rural employment. Given that the application states that it will be family dwelling for the farm owner this is not creating local employment. Mr Jones stated that the applicant employed 3 part time tractor drivers and contractor</p>	
2	<p><b>Attendance:</b></p> <p>Councillors Howles (in Chair), Burrow (taking minutes), Lloyd, Cambage, Hitchcock, Edwards, Drake</p> <p>Borough Councillor David Bell and 5 members of the public.</p>	
3	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Richard Wilson (Clerk)</p>	
4	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Councillor Lloyd declared an interest as Chairman of HHAG in relation to agenda item 20h. No pecuniary interests or requests for dispensation.</p>	
5	<p><b>Confirmation of minutes</b></p> <p>The minutes of meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
6	<p><b>Matters Arising</b></p> <p>With reference to item 8 of last meeting's minutes, Councillor Burrow reported that the Clerk had checked with the band for the BBQ and they were willing to play again this year at an estimated cost of £360. It was agreed to authorise the Clerk to obtain a firm quote, make a provisional booking for approval at the next PC meeting along with a cost for the toilets.</p>	Clerk
7	<p><b>Borough Councillors report and Parish Councillors Opinion</b></p> <p>Councillor Hitchcock reported that the ditches on Coventry Road needed attention to make them drain properly.</p>	Hitchcock

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	<p>The pollution reported in the Well was not evident either to Councillors Hitchcock or Burrow on separate visits. It was agreed that Councillor Hitchcock would ask a local resident to get a sample when/if the pollution next appeared.</p> <p>Councillor Hitchcock reported that the hedge/tree cutting on Hallmeadow Road was very poor and in places the fence had been cut. Mr Hitchcock was asked to get photos so that it could be reported to SMBC</p>	Hitchcock
8	<p><b>Planning</b></p> <p>2016-00263 Lower Farm Spencer's Lane It was agreed to object to the planning application. The temporary clerk would draft a letter for Councillors comment based upon</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development in the greenbelt was inappropriate unless it satisfied very special circumstances and the Council did not believe that test had been met</li> <li>2. The Council's view was that the development did not have to be in this specific location given that redundant/derelict agricultural building owned by the applicant in the same vicinity and the utilisation of that site would minimise the impact on the greenbelt should the proposed buildings required meet the very special circumstances test</li> <li>3. The Council doubted that the stated need for an onsite stockman was required given the short distance to the current farm house on Nailcote Lane. Councillor Burrow to verify that the travel time as supplied by Mr Jones was a reasonable estimate</li> <li>4. The specified need in the planning application is for a family home and not stockman's dwelling</li> </ol> <p>2016-00424 Meriden Landfill site No objection</p> <p>2016-0393 Retrospective approval for warehouse building height increase on Duggins Lane No objection in principle but owner should paint the building green which would have been the Council's normal stipulation to minimise visual impact on the greenbelt had the original planning permission requested a ridge height of 7714mm</p> <p>2016-00455 Avondale, Hodgett's Lane No objection</p> <p>2016 – 00435 Cherry Tree, Truggist Lane No objection</p> <p>2016 – 00493 Rock Farm Back lane No objection subject to additional tree screening provided</p> <p>2016-00527 – Pine Lodge No objection subject to requirements that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do not allow for the removal of mature trees on Kelsey lane as proposed</li> <li>2. The applicant is required to provide a pavement for public use from Kelsey Lane to the entrance of the existing buildings entrance on Meeting House Lane. This is because Meeting House Lane is extensively used as a walking route into Balsall Common centre and the Meeting House Lane bends and narrows at the junction with Kelsey Lane. This is already an area of hazard for</li> </ol>	<p>Burrow</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

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	<p>pedestrians that will be made worse by another entrance onto Meeting Lane on this bend.</p> <p>2016- 00524 – 43 Grovefield No objection</p>	
11	<p><b>Financial matters</b></p> <p>a) All payments shown in appendix 2 to the agenda were approved and cheques signed.</p>	
12	<p><b>Clerk's Pay</b> The Council approved an increase in the Clerk's salary to pay point B on the approved Berkswell Salary Scale (£6,772 p.a.) with effect from 1st January 2016. In addition the Council resolved to delegate to the Chairman the authority to confirm in writing to the Clerk the:</p> <p>a) revised salary b) approved salary scale and progression criteria c) deferral of the contractual requirement for the Clerk to commence training for the CILCA qualification until July 2017 when the Council will consider the matter in full.</p>	Burrow/ Howles
13	<p><b>Financial Regulations</b> The new Financial Regulations dated March 2016 (appendix 3 to the agenda) were approved for immediate implementation</p>	Clerk
14	<p><b>Risk Management</b> The risk assessment and action shown in appendix 4 to the agenda was approved</p>	Clerk
15	<p><b>Schedule of Regular Payments</b> The Schedule of regular payments shown in appendix 5 to the agenda was approved.</p>	Clerk
16	<p><b>Reserve Policy</b> The Reserve Policy as shown in appendix 6 to the agenda was discussed and then approved.</p>	
17	<p>3 Year Forecast The Council discussed and approved the 3 year forecast shown in appendix 7 to the agenda</p>	
18	<p><b>IT Policy</b> The Council noted that its IT Policy was adopted in March 2013. It agreed with the Clerk's proposal that it be updated and requested that the Clerk bring forward proposals for its update by the May 2016 meeting. The Clerk at his discretion may bring forward the update at the April 2016 meeting depending upon workload recognising the volume of change/improvement currently being pursued by the Clerk.</p>	
19	<p><b>Correspondence</b> The Council noted receipt of a letter from Roy Jones informing the Council of the decision to close the museum and giving 3 months formal notice. Mr Jones advised the Council verbally that the Council was responsible for the outstanding funds and the dispersal/disposal on exhibits. Mr Jones also advised that the Berkswell Charities required vacant possession but no timescale was specified in the agreement. It was noted that some of the items had been lent to the Museum by their owners. It was agreed to discuss the issue at its next meeting. In the meantime Mr Hitchcock was authorised to contact outside bodies to see if they were interested in taking any items.</p>	

20	<p><b>Ongoing References</b></p>	
	<p><b>a) Land and assets</b>                  Councillor Edwards stated that she was working with the Clerk to record the Council’s ownership of the spinney with Land Registry. She needed a map of the area to progress it. This was only one of several registrations that needed to take place. For some land (e.g. The pound and Spinney) the Council had documents of sale as exhibits to demonstrate ownership. For others the documentation was less clear. The Council agreed that this was an important but not urgent issue given that the land involved had been unregistered for years. It was also noted that the Land Registry was in process of moving offices and there were significant delays in the system. The Council set itself a target of 1Q 2017 to make all applications with the Land Registry.</p>	
	<p><b>b) NDP Report</b>                  Councillor Burrow reported that he and Councillor Howles has met with Anne Brereton and Gary Palmer (Officials of SMBC) together with Ian Courts Cabinet Member for Managed growth to explain the Council’s approach on new housing arising from the Solihull Plan. Borough Councillor Bell also attended. Mr Burrow explained that his presentation had kept to the scope of the Council’s submission to emphasise its rationale particularly the 4 principles laid down the Council’s consultation response. He did give some personal examples of sites within Berkswell Parish which he considered would meet with the Council’s criteria but these were not Council proposals. SMBC has yet to publish a formal list of sites submitted for housing development during the “call for sites” process so no proper consideration of sites was yet possible. He explained that a list of sites would be published before any analysis of their suitability by SMBC to inform PCs and residents. It was noted that Mr Courts asked Councillor Howles and Burrow’s opinion of a bypass for Balsall Common through Berkswell Parish in the Barratt’s Farm area. He was prompted to do this based on an e mail submission which Mr Courts said had come from Balsall PC. Mr Courts explained that the original bypass concept had been removed from the Solihull Plan at the request of the Highways Agency which said it was not justified. Mr Courts explained that the concept was to meet the cost by building houses on the Barratt’s Farm area. Mr Courts said that there would be increased traffic due to people travelling to the HS2 station. Ms Brereton advised that SMBC was in discussions/applying for funds from government to assist with the impact of HS2 operation on the Borough. Mr Burrow stated that they had not been able to speak on behalf of the Council but indicated that such a concept would be in contravention of one the principles of Berkswell PC’s housing submission and was unlikely to be acceptable to residents of the Parish or the Parish Council but that they would take it away for thought. Mr Courts had advised the Councillors that that it might be a one off opportunity to get a bypass and he thought it could be considered as part of the NDP.</p> <p>Mr Burrow advised that he felt that the officials had really listened, they had advised that they had found the session helpful and they had said that they would like to meet again further down the process.</p>	
<p><b>c) Spinney</b>                  Councillor Hitchcock reported that the tree warden would be undertaking some clear up work on 12 March. He further reported that the oak on the village green had 2 dead branches which were a risk. Given the conservation status he proposed to discuss it with the Tree Officer but proposed urgent action was taken. This was agreed given the H&amp;S risk</p>	Hitchcock & Clerk	

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	<p><b>d) Traffic Calming</b> Councillor Edwards reported that a drop in session to get residents input would take place on 12<sup>th</sup> March between 10 am and noon at the village shop.</p>	
	<p><b>e) Planning enforcement</b> Councillor Lloyd said that with David Bell's assistance SMBC had supplied all planning consents for Truggist Hill Farm. He was attempting to match these with current activities.</p>	
	<p><b>f) Aircraft Noise</b> Councillor Lloyd explained that he airport had announced that they were to introduce conventional routing for the northern turn over Riddings Hill. The airport felt that this would give better control of aircraft and they would be drawing up new conventional routes for implementation. The Airport were still awaiting the approval of the CAA to the new routing and the NPR ceiling of 4000ft.</p>	
	<p><b>g) Trimming on the A452</b> Councillor Lloyd reported that Bruce Brant SMBC had promised cutting but action was still awaited.</p>	
	<p><b>h) HS2 Update</b> Councillor Lloyd reported that the Select Committee has published its report which was disappointing in its recommendations. It appeared that the Public Bill Committee might progress with amendments based on the report. There was an opportunity for MPs to table amendments and he had sent suggestions to Caroline Spelman MP. These had appeared on the Public Bill Committee lists but he was unsure what that meant. The 3<sup>rd</sup> reading was scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> march thereafter the Bill went to the Lords. The procedure for petitioning the Lords was different to the Commons and the Council might need an EGM might need to be held at short notice to authorise a petition. The Council authorised Councillor Lloyd to work with the Clerk to develop a petition based on the Councils three commons petitions.</p>	
	<p><b>i) Unrecorded rights of way</b> The Clerk has requested a map from SMBC</p>	
	<p><b>j) Birthday Beacon</b> After discussion it was agreed not to progress this in view of the short timescales and limited resources to do this and the BBQ</p>	
	<p><b>k) Pound</b> The draft letter was approved. Councillor Lloyd suggested double checking it to ensure that at all points it came across in a friendly manner. Councillor Edwards to confirm date of spinney transfer to PC ownership from sales documents for inclusion in letter.</p>	Edwards
24	<p><b>Heritage</b></p>	
	<p><b>a) Flooding</b> After discussion, the Council concluded that there was little they could do about Berkswell village flooding given that SMBC is the Lead Local Flood Authority whose role was to work where appropriate with other agencies. Councillor Burrow undertook to ensure that the Drainage section of SMBC had been formally advised of the issue.</p>	Burrow
	<p><b>b) Off road bikes</b> The Council noted SMBC about inappropriate use of off road bikes. Councillors were not aware that this was a problem in the Parish but noted the hot line for reporting. 0121 717 1500</p>	
	<p><b>c) Fair trade buying</b></p>	

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	<p>Councillors noted the e mail from SMBC but on consideration felt that it was not appropriate for Berkswell Council because our purchases did not include relevant items to any degree or indeed at all</p>	
	<p><b>d) Mowing Church Yard</b>                  The Council considered Councillor Drake’s recommendations regarding the Council’s commitment to meet half the mowing costs of the churchyard. The mowing covered the graveyard, the future land for graveyard which is used for community activities at present and the Rector’s garden. It was noted that the Council made no contribution to the cutting of hedges or trees in the graveyard/future graveyard. On balance Councillors considered that meeting 50% of the cost of mowing the defined areas, including the Rectors grass, was an appropriate and practical approach to meeting 50% of the costs of all horticultural maintenance of the churchyard/future church yard including hedging/tree work (which was intermittent in nature although significant in extent). It was approved that the current arrangement of meeting 50% of the mowing cost would continue.</p> <p>However, the Council needed to show good value for the contract and would ask (require) the contract to be tendered competitively using the recent Council approach to its own grass mowing contract. The Clerk will advise the Church of this position and Councillor Burrow offered to help the church with the process. Alistair Diamond speaking for the church said that it was their intention to seek competitive quotes and award a 3 year contract.</p>	Clerk/ Burrow
	<p><b>e) Traffic on Meeting House Lane</b>                  Councillor Cambage led a discussion on increasing traffic on Meeting House Lane which was a major pedestrian thoroughfare from Kelsey lane to Balsall Common centre and for most of the route was without footpath. It was her impression that it was a part of a route to avoid Kenilworth Road, a situation that would increase with planned HS2 traffic. It was agreed to survey residents of Meeting House Lane and the closes off the Lane to assess opinion on further traffic calming and the introduction of safe areas for pedestrians where possible. John Cairns (local resident) offered to help with leaflet distribution.</p>	Cambage/ Lloyd/ Burrow
	<p><b>f) Council Response to SMBC rights of way consultation</b>                  The Council approved for Councillor Lloyd to draft a response.</p>	Lloyd
25	<p><b>Council Administration</b>                  a) A proposal that the Clerk look at a proposal to join a join website design lead by Meriden Council was approved in view of the withdrawal of the current web contractor’s support. The Council noted that the church had commissioned a web designer to replace their web page within the current Spirit of Berkswell joint site. It was recommended that the Clerk spoke to the Church secretary to understand what they were doing and whether there were lessons to learn to keep the spirit of Berkswell concept working.</p>	Clerk
26	<p>Next meeting of the Council 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 7.15 pm, the Westlake Room, Balsall Common</p>	