

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell,
held in the Reading Room, Berkswell, on
12th December 2013 at 7:45 PM**

1. Attendance

Cllrs Benton, Hitchcock, Howles, Lloyd, Lock (Chairman) and Meeson.

Eleven members of the public including Cllr Diccico and three representatives of the Scouts.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bell, Mr Brant, and Mrs Hemmings (SMBC).

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 November 2013 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere

All matters were covered under the relevant agenda items.

6. Public opinion and Borough Councillor's report

Mrs J Applegarth was invited by the Chairman to give a presentation on the proposal for a new Scout House on the Current site adjacent to the Spinney Car Park. This had been discussed during an open evening held in the present building on 3rd December.

The proposed building had a slightly larger footprint, but was on two floors to allow concurrent events to be held and to increase the storage space. Nevertheless, it was not the intention to increase the number of attendees in the main group activities.

Plans and visualisations were shown.

Mrs Applegarth said there had been a positive response to the scheme, that the Berkswell Charities had offered to provide some of the funding, and that the best time for construction would be during the summer holidays. She said there had been some concerns about the height, impact on the conservation area, trees, and drainage.

The Scouts proposed to commission further visualisations at a cost of over £500. Cllr Lloyd suggested the number of views could be reduced if agreed with all interested parties. Cllr Hitchcock repeated earlier concerns, and asked what could be done to reduce disruption during construction. Mrs Applegarth said the builders would be required to produce a method statement.

Discussions continued after the close of Public opinion, in item §10.4 below.

In answer to an enquiry about encouraging more orderly use of the parking spaces in the Spinney Car Park, Cllr Lock said white lines might not be suitable in the conservation area, and he would seek advice.

Asked about the surfaced footways on the Meriden Rd, Cllr Lock said **he would investigate whether either of them could be extended at the point where it was necessary to cross the road from one to the other.**

Cllr Diccico gave a brief report on the latest Solihull full Council meeting. To his disappointment, nothing had been said on HS2, and reports from the Working Party weren't discussed. The Local Plan had been ratified, and the only risk of inappropriate development in the Greenbelt was the duty to cooperate with Birmingham City Council, who were short of housing land provision. However, they had their own Greenbelt land, which they should use first.

Cllr Lock enquired who at Solihull MBC was responsible for implementing the revised Local Council Charter. **Cllr Diccico said he would enquire.**

Cllr Hitchcock asked what help was available from Solihull MBC for petitioning on the HS2 Hybrid Bill. **Cllr Diccico said he would enquire.**

Cllr Lock explained that it had been agreed a Solihull MBC officer would attend future Council meetings, but unfortunately it was not possible for this meeting. Cllr Lloyd added the Council would regard such attendance as a courtesy, as it would promote cooperation and our meetings were a good opportunity for Solihull MBC to receive feedback from residents.

7. Highways (SMBC)

7.1 Proposed diversion of Footpaths M217 and M229 at Cornets End

The Council's request for restoration of these paths had been acknowledged by Solihull MBC.

7.2 Lorry traffic - Truggist Hill Farm

Cllr Lloyd had a meeting with Cllr Diccico and Mr Wigfield of Solihull MBC on 2 December. Further action was in hand by Planning Enforcement regarding over-width vehicles and other planning issues.

7.3 Other matters

In the absence of a Solihull MBC officer, **it was agreed to carry over other matters to the next meeting:**

Regulation of street works

Replacement direction signs at Carol Green

Speed restriction signage approaching Berkswell crossroads

Proposal to restrict parking in lay-bys on A452

Street cleaning, hedge trimming

Footpath problems and update on named route to Hampton-in-Arden

Kenilworth Greenway - access at Berkswell Station

Flooding - SMBC response

8. Finance

8.1 Accounts for approval and payment

It was resolved to pay the following invoices:

<u>Chq no</u>	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Gross</u>	<u>VAT</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1618	GR Mowing	£522.00	£87.00	Dec-Feb Mowing

1619	SMBC	£1153.68	Councillors allowances Jul-Sept
1620	Ian Geddes	£42.88	Website Oct-Dec
1621	J Caffery	£357.00	June-Oct
1622	WALC	£3.00	Good Councillors Guide
1623	K Howles	£43.97	Repair to noticeboard/filing boxes
1624	S Benton	£17.11	Filing boxes

8.2 *Budget setting and cost reduction 2014/ 15*

The Council had been advised of a further reduction in support, as the change to housing benefit meant that fewer properties were now paying the precept.

It was agreed **the Council would have informal discussions so that a budget could be presented for debate and approval at the next meeting on 9 January.**

9. **Correspondence received (not covered elsewhere)**

An appeal had been received from the Open Spaces Society for funds. It was agreed not to make a further donation.

10. **Neighbourhood development**

10.1 *Field by the church, Meeting House Lane*

There had been correspondence with the Archdiocese about preserving community use of the site, and the matter had been referred to a higher level within their organisation. It was noted that the Berkswell Charities had also opened discussions with the Archdiocese.

10.2 *Proposed development by Cassidy, Duggins Lane*

Cllr Howles agreed to draft a letter for the Chairman to send to Cassidy and Solihull MBC, giving the views of the Council as set out in previous meetings.

10.3 *NDP update and Community Right to Bid*

Cllr Howles said there would be a small 3-way meeting with Balsall PC and Solihull MBC once the other two parties had resolved their issues.

10.4 *Proposed new Scout House*

There was a continuation of discussions started during Public opinion (§6 above). Further representations were made by residents about the size and height of the proposed building. Councillors felt the justification for the second storey was open to challenge, and that the building would not be in harmony with other buildings in the Conservation Area.

It was agreed the **Chairman would advise the Scouts of these fundamental concerns.**

10.5 *Trees in Berkswell Conservation Area.*

Cllr Lock expressed concern that residents were unaware of the need for Planning Consent for tree works in the Conservation Area. Guidance notes were available from Solihull MBC. **Cllr Lock undertook to publicise the matter in the Parish Magazine and the Bugle.**

10.6 *Matters arising from Planning Approval 2013/ 1575 Service Station*

Councillors expressed their regret that Solihull MBC had given retrospective approval for the line of bollards instead of a low brick wall. This was detrimental to the street

scene. Cllr Hitchcock said he was aware of planned works in the adjacent coppice, and he had asked the firm involved to discuss their plans with the Council.

Councillors were pleased that the proposed extension of hours for fuel deliveries had been withdrawn, but there was concern the matter could be raised again in a few months time. It was agreed **Cllr Hitchcock would draft a letter for the Chairman to send to the proprietor**, advising them that extended hours would be opposed, both by residents and the Council.

11. Heritage and community

11.1 Flourish Partnership - study of renewable energy

Cllr Lock said that a reduction in Government support had reduced the likelihood of the study proceeding.

11.2 Berkswell Museum

Cllrs Benton and Lock had met the Museum committee, and had learnt that visitor numbers were declining and all options were being considered. It was agreed to discuss the situation again at the next meeting.

11.3 Notice Board near British Legion

Cllr Lloyd reported he had written to Solihull MBC, and they had responded by suggesting a replacement notice board could be included in next year's Ward Action Plan.

11.4 Options for Pound Close play area.

Cllr Lock said the play area had been cleared, and we should discuss options for future use of the area at the next meeting.

12. HS2

12.1 Council response to Property Compensation consultation

The Council's response was submitted on 4 December. As agreed, the Council recommended a Property Bond system without a geographical restriction.

12.2 HS2 Bill and Environmental Statement

Cllr Lloyd reported that the HS2 Bill had now been deposited and the consultation on the formal version of the Environmental Statement would run until 24 January. There was a vast amount of documentation available on the HS2 website, but the provision of paper copies had been disappointing. A restricted set of documents was supplied to the Council, and these were deposited in Balsall Common Library for public reference.

Additional paper copies had been supplied by Mrs Spelman, and some of the "reference" material maps had been supplied directly by HS2 Ltd. The Council was expecting to receive more memory sticks of data for loan to the public.

Cllr Hitchcock said that he was amongst those who had demonstrated in Parliament Square on 25 November against HS2. A coach had been organised by HHAG to take people down from Balsall Common and Burton Green.

Cllr Lloyd said that, in his opinion, the new consultation had a different purpose to the earlier one, stated to be "to ensure that the decision taken by Parliament at Second Reading of the Bill is informed by the public's views on the Bill's environmental impacts". It was agreed this should be raised at the next meeting of the Solihull MBC

Working Party on 19 December. Cllr Lock said he understood there would be a "walk through" of the latest maps of our area, and we should ask the Working Party how they intended to respond to the Environmental Statement consultation.

12.3 Proposed meeting with HS2 Ltd on outstanding issues

It was agreed Cllr Lock would accept their invitation, and that discussions should be based on requests made in our previous consultation responses.

12.4 Affiliation to 51M group of councils

Cllr Lloyd said we had notified 51M of our intent to affiliate, and he was waiting to meet their representative to discuss alternative schemes to HS2 in our area.

13. Airport

Cllr Lloyd said there had been no matters arising.

14. Administration

14.1 Vacancy on Council

Cllr Lock said that there was still only one candidate for co-option onto the Council, and he hoped the process could be completed at the next meeting.

14.2 Recruitment of Clerk

The Staff Committee had reviewed the applications received, and planned to interview a number of applicants. It was agreed the whole Council should have an opportunity to meet the preferred candidate prior to appointment.

14.3 Centro - bus shelter trip hazard

Cllr Meeson reported he had written to Centro and was awaiting a reply.

14.4 Meeting dates for PC 2014.

Dates are agreed for January and February. **Cllr Lock agreed to recommend dates for the rest of the year.**

15. Next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held on 9 January 2014 at 7:45 pm, in the Jubilee Centre, Station Road, Balsall Common.

The meeting closed at 10:00 pm.

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9 January 2014