

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell,
held in the Jubilee Centre, Balsall Common, on
9th January 2014 at 7:45 pm**

1. Attendance

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

16 members of the public including Mr B Brant of Solihull MBC.

*co-opted to the Council during the meeting.

2. Apologies

Cllr Benton, Borough Cllrs Bell and Diccico, Mr Cairns.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee and Council held on 12 December 2013 were confirmed as accurate, and signed by Cllr Benton and the Chairman, respectively.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere

None.

6. Co-option of Cllr Cambage

It was resolved to co-opt Ms Alison Cambage to fill the vacancy on the Council. She introduced herself to the meeting as a resident of Meeting House Lane, and working for a housing association in Wolverhampton. The declaration of acceptance of office was signed by the Chairman and Cllr Cambage.

7. Public opinion and Borough Councillor's report

Mr Green drew attention to the damage being done by vehicles parking on the grass verges of Station Rd near Green Lane. Oak posts were installed, but more were needed.

Mr Brant of Solihull MBC responded by saying it was a borough-wide issue, and an enforcement campaign was underway in Dickens Heath. Solihull MBC had a policy to avoid additional street furniture where possible. However, **the matter would be added to the issues list for investigation.**

Mr Beasley opened discussions about HS2. Cllr Lock confirmed the Council remained strongly against the project. Cllr Hitchcock summarised the reasons as the environmental damage, the cost, the economics, and the 10 years of disruption that construction would bring.

Cllr Meeson said that the Council had been in the forefront of opposition, and that he had stood 2 years ago in the Borough Council elections as an independent opposing the project.

Mr Beasley enquired about the stance on mitigation. Cllr Lock the Council would seek to get a tunnelled solution in our area through the petitioning process, if the project went

ahead. He recalled that Solihull Council and our MP had met the Secretary of State on 27 November 2011 to press for a tunnel, but there was no public record of that meeting and it appeared the representations had been ignored.

Cllr Lock explained that Solihull MBC were limiting their consultation responses and petitioning to major issues on which they thought they had a good chance of being successful. This appeared to be because they would employ expensive representatives.

Mr Wilcox asked how the list of Solihull MBC issues could be influenced. Cllr Lock said the Working Party meeting on Tuesday 14th was the best opportunity. Mr Tindall commented that the Solihull Working Party seemed to have achieved very little and that they should be pressing on all issues, regardless of their expected chance of success. Mr Green supported this view.

Cllr Lloyd cautioned the meeting about the strength of legal agreements reached with HS2 Ltd. These would be ineffective unless the signatories were fully prepared to take enforcement action. He hoped that a future Parish Council would be prepared to do so.

Cllr Lloyd reported that his application to become an agent for petitioning on the HS2 Bill had been accepted, but he encouraged others to make similar applications. He gave a presentation of the formal wording required in a petition to Parliament. Cllr Lock said that the Council would need to arrange workshop meetings to help residents prepare their petitions, later in the year.

Cllr Lock asked residents whether they shared his concern about the design change made by HS2 Ltd, without prior consultation, to replace lengthy viaducts with embankments and short bridges. There was a general feeling that viaducts were desirable from the point of view of flood potential and visual appearance. Solihull MBC had been asked to give expert advice on whether noise barriers could be as effective on viaducts.

Mr L Williams said he had requested 11 changes from HS2 Ltd but had only been offered some additional plantings. His main concern was the lack of accommodation bridges for farm vehicles, which could cost him 2 hours 20 minutes a day during harvest.

The proposed temporary roundabout at the Park Lane junction with Kenilworth road was discussed. Cllr Lock said it was important this was removed after the construction phase, lest it discouraged the return of the adjacent land to agricultural use.

8. Highways and other SMBC issues

It was agreed to carry over the list of items to the next meeting due to a lack of information:

- Replacement direction signs at Carol Green (it was confirmed the fingerposts had been installed)
- Regulation of street works
- Speed restriction signage approaching Berkswell crossroads
- Lorry traffic and planning enforcement - Truggist Hill Farm
- Street cleaning, hedge trimming
- Proposal to restrict parking in lay-bys on A452
- Proposed diversion of Footpaths M217 and M229 at Cornets End
- Footpath flooding problems on M192 and M210
- Kenilworth Greenway - access at Berkswell Station. Mr Brant said the Cyclists' Touring Club had recently written to Solihull MBC on this issue.

- Flooding - SMBC response
- Notice Board near the British Legion (added into plan for next financial year)

Mr L Williams drew attention to the volume of water flowing across the A452 near Blooms garden centre. This was an icing hazard, and there had been 4 recent accidents. It seemed to be a recurrence of an old problem that had appeared to have been cured when the road was realigned.

9. Council response to Centro 10% budget cut consultation

The options presented by Centro in the budget cut consultation were discussed. The consultation will close on 19 January. Because of the low provision of bus services in the Parish, it was agreed the Council should respond to the consultation, making 3 points:

- the Ring and Ride service was important to the community and should be protected from cuts
- the ability to use senior citizen cards on the trains was important because of the lack of busses, and should remain free
- if savings were required, then Centro should reduce its administration head-count and seek reductions from suppliers.

Cllr Lloyd agreed to draft a response for the Chairman to send.

10. Finance

10.1 Accounts for approval and payment

It was resolved to approve the following payments:

| <u>Chq no</u> | <u>Supplier</u> | <u>Gross</u> | <u>VAT</u> | <u>Reason</u> |
|---------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 1625 | SWS | £4947.85 | | Settlement agreement |
| 1626 | WTP | £35.00 | | Cllr Benton training course |
| 1627 | GR Dawson | £684.00 | £114.00 | Churchyard Mowing Oct-Dec |

10.2 Budget setting

Councillors would be meeting informally on 16 January to discuss budget issues. An Extraordinary Meeting would be arranged for public discussions before the precept request was sent to Solihull MBC.

11. Correspondence received, not covered elsewhere

Cllr Lloyd reported that he had received a response, dated 18 December, from Network Rail about the ragwort infestations he had reported in the summer. He recommended that in the coming season, people should report ragwort growth as soon as possible.

12. Neighbourhood development

12.1 Neighbourhood development plan

Cllr Howles reported the Council was still waiting to hear from Balsall PC as to when a joint meeting with Sarah James could be arranged, and it was agreed **the matter should be kept on the agenda.**

12.2 Proposed development by Cassidy, Duggins Lane

Cllr Howles reported that she had written to Cassidy and Solihull MBC, giving the Council's views on the proposed development.

12.3 Proposed new Scout House

Cllr Lock reported that he had informed the Scouts of the concerns of residents about the size of the proposed new building.

12.4 Matters arising from Planning Approval 2013/ 1575

Cllrs Hitchcock and Lock said they were working on the letter about difficulties over the Service Station development. Cllr Hitchcock reported that a fresh concern had emerged, over the intensity of lighting in the totem signage.

12.5 Trees in Berkswell Conservation Area

The Council's Planning Application 2013/1948 for tree works in the Spinney had been approved. Cllr Lock reported that the cuttings would be made available to residents. He also reported that Solihull MBC was revising its guidance note on tree works in Conservation Areas, and that he would be prepared to deliver copies to residents when it became available.

13. Heritage and community

13.1 Berkswell Museum

Cllr Lock said he understood the Museum was likely to close, and that the Council should be prepared to assist with looking after the contents.

13.2 Options for Pound Close play area

It was agreed **discussion of future arrangements would be carried over to the next meeting.**

Mr Brant of Solihull MBC was making enquiries about the ownership of the adjacent area, below Pound Close, that is used for car parking.

13.3 Packhorse Way

Cllr Lloyd said that Hampton in Arden PC had raised the proposed waymarking with Solihull MBC and were awaiting a response.

14. HS2

A draft response to the current consultation on the HS2 Environmental Statement had been circulated by Cllr Lloyd. He understood the purpose of the consultation was to inform MPs of the environmental impact of the scheme for when they voted at Second Reading on the principle of the Bill. He thought that questions of detail would be required at the petitioning stage, but were not essential at this stage, except as examples.

The draft response indicated that the environmental impact on the Parish could be reduced by adopting (a) an alternative scheme, (b) a tunnel with easterly realignment, (c) a tunnel on the existing line, or (d) detailed mitigation, in descending order of effectiveness. It was agreed to accept this approach. **Further drafts would be circulated for comment,** before submission of the response.

There were numerous concerns that needed resolution (see also item 7 - Public opinion and Borough Councillor's report). It was agreed the temporary roundabout at Park Lane should not be retained, and that proper access for farming purposes would be needed over the footbridge for the Heart of England Way.

Cllr Lloyd said the Council had affiliated to 51M, and he was waiting to meet them to discuss alternatives to HS2.

Cllr Lock undertook to arrange the meeting proposed by HS2 Ltd on outstanding issues. Cllrs Lloyd, Lock and Meeson would represent the Council.

15. Airport

Cllr Lloyd said the Environmental Monitoring Working Group would be meeting the following week, and the first meeting in 6 months of the Airport Consultative Committee would take place in the week after that.

Mr Tindall advised that trials of both "option 5" and "option 6" were to take place for Runway 15 departures, following pressure from local pilots. However, the option for a "turn-on-height" was not being taken further at this stage, so "option 6" would increase the impact on Barston.

Mr Felthouse said the *Bugle* was planning to do a special supplement on the Airspace Change Process in the next issue. It was agreed **the Council should contribute copy by 8 February.**

16. Administration

16.1 Recruitment of Clerk

Cllr Lock announced that, following interviews, the Council was close to making an appointment to fill the vacancy.

16.2 Meeting dates

Cllr Lock said that meeting dates for the rest of the year would be set shortly.

17. Next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held on 13 February 2014 at 7:45 pm in the Reading Room, Berkswell, preceded by a meeting of the Planning Committee at 7:15 pm.

The meeting closed at 10:00 pm.

Cllr G Lock
Chairman of the Parish Council
Beehive Cottage
Lavender Hall Lane
Berkswell
CV7 7BL

01676 530362

clerk@berkswellparishcouncil.org.uk

28 January 2014