

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell,  
held in the Reading Room, Berkswell,  
on 9th May 2013 at 7:45 PM**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Benton, Cllr Howles, and Borough Cllr Bell.

**2. Attendance**

Cllrs Burrow, Hitchcock, Lloyd, Lock (Chairman) and Meeson.

Borough Cllr Diciccio

Members of the public: Messrs Cairns, Dymond, Ebbans, Hickin, Hubbard, and Lupton (Berkswell Parish) and Messrs Felthouse and Tindall (Balsall Parish).

**3. Declarations of interest**

None.

**4. Election of Chairman**

Cllr Lock was re-elected unopposed as Chairman.

Cllr Howles was re-elected unopposed as Vice-chairman.

**5. Confirmation of previous minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March were approved as a true record of the meeting, and signed by the Chairman.

**6. Matters arising from previous minutes**

**6.1 *Named footpath route Berkswell to Hampton-in-Arden***

Cllr Lloyd reported that Hampton-in-Arden PC had indicated support for designating a named route between Berkswell and Hampton via Packhorse Bridge. The two councils could fund the necessary waymark discs, and request Solihull MBC to fit them. It was agreed that **Cllr Lloyd and Mr Lupton should liaise with Hampton PC** on the details of the route, its name, and the design of the waymarks, and **these issues should be discussed at the Parish Assembly** on 23 May.

**6.2 *Ditches - Coventry Road***

Solihull MBC has inspected the area, and placed some traffic cones. Follow-up action is needed - **Cllr Diciccio was asked to progress this.**

**6.3 *Turning traffic - Lincoln's Farm***

Cllr Meeson said that Cllr Bell is discussing the issue with the Highways department.

**6.4 *Schedule of cleaning - Balsall Common***

**Continuing action to liaise with Ms Kauser** (Balsall PC) and get the SMBC schedule of cleaning. Mr Felthouse offered to pass on to Cllr Lock his contact able to deal with littering on the Partco carpark.

**6.5 Balsall Common notice board**

**Continuing action to provide Mr Green with a key.**

**6.6 Mud on Cornets End Lane**

Cllr Burrow had inspected the Lane, but there wasn't a problem at that time.

**6.7 Working party re cost savings in 2014-15**

The Working Party has yet to convene.

**6.8 Green Infrastructure Strategy including biodiversity offsetting**

Cllr Hitchcock reported that a consultation response had been made on behalf of the Tree Wardens.

**6.9 Re-siting of speed visors**

Cllr Meeson has looked at possible sites and is making contact with Mr Green.

**6.10 Health and Safety Risk assessment**

Cllr Burrow reported he had received the report from Solihull MBC and had circulated it to the Council. He and Cllr Meeson will **review and determine priorities**. The Pound Close play equipment is a particular problem, needing renovation and weekly inspection. It's unclear how much the equipment is used.

Cllr Lock will be involved with issues in the Conservation Area. Cllr Hitchcock reported there was still a problem with children climbing on the Stocks. Cllr Burrow said they are now deteriorating, and he and Mr Bailey will be considering what can be done to preserve them.

**7. Public opinion and District Councillor's report**

**7.1 Minutes**

Mr Felthouse queried whether the meeting was legal in the absence of the Clerk. Cllr Lloyd said the legal requirement was to produce minutes, and this would be done.

**7.2 Greenway**

Mr Hickin reported on the Greenway - see §9.3

**7.3 Parking - Church Lane**

Mr Ebbans expressed concern about the enforcement of parking restrictions in Church Lane. Solihull MBC have embarked on a campaign of "intense enforcement" of parking restriction around five Borough schools, to address "inconsiderate parking", and are undertaking a parallel survey to see its effect. It appears that the Primary School was informed, but residents, ward councillors, and the Parish Council were not.

Mr Ebbans said that 5 residents had received penalty tickets, but they had nowhere near their homes to park because of long-stay parking by school staff. Mr Hickin observed that the school had been allowed to expand without consideration of parking issues. Cllr Burrow believed there was adequate space in the village as a whole, and was concerned that the warning about enforcement had only gone to some people and not others.

Cllr Diccio agreed there were communication errors, and accepted two actions from Cllr Lock - to seek a cure for the communication problems, and a remedy for the residents that had been disadvantaged. **Cllr Lock undertook to write to the School**, and ask that staff park in more appropriate locations.

## **8. Administrative matters and correspondence**

### **8.1 Proposal from Linda Deeley re pony patrol**

Cllr Lock reported that a proposal had been received for a way to monitor problems around the parish, and **it would be discussed at the June meeting.**

### **8.2 Response to Community Infrastructure Levy consultation**

A response in favour of the Solihull MBC proposal was submitted by Cllr Burrow, after discussion with other members, on 14 April 2013. This was ratified by the meeting.

It was noted that the proportion of the levy payable to the parish would increase from 15% to 25% if we had a Neighbourhood Development Plan. However, it had been reported that these proportions were already under review by the Government.

## **9. Ordinary business**

### **9.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan**

In the absence of Cllr Howles, Cllr Burrow reported that Solihull MBC had expressed doubt as to whether a boundary based on the Parish would be acceptable as it cut through the community of Balsall Common. Alternatives would be to follow the Greenbelt boundary, or to work on a joint Plan with Balsall PC. A joint plan seemed to conflict with earlier advice, but appeared to have been prepared elsewhere.

Work would continue with the Council's planning consultant, and the matter would be discussed with Balsall PC.

### **9.2 HS2**

Cllr Lock reported on an informal meeting held between Councillors and HS2 Ltd on 7 May. It was alarming to hear further details of the construction plans. Building the viaduct at Berkswell Station would take 42 months with construction traffic routed via Waste Lane and Truggist Lane. However, there appeared to be willingness to consider some alternatives to their current plans, such as creating a works access road and using that, instead of damaging the Greenway and then trying to reinstate it.

Very disappointingly, there was no definite response on the proposed tunnel, but the impression was that it had not been approved by the Secretary of State. Cllr Meeson proposed the Chairman should send a very strong letter to Mrs Spelman demanding maximum pressure be applied. This was agreed unanimously.

Mr Tindall pointed out that our MP should not need reminding of the need to press for the best mitigation for the area.

Mr Hickin reported on his address on blight and compensation to the Solihull MBC Working Party on 18 April. The WP is now trying to find the extent of blight in the Borough, and Cllr Diciccio agreed to work with Mr Hickin to assist them in the task. Solihull MBC were thought to have the resources to gather meaningful data, and to request the information held by Government on applications for compensation.

Cllr Lloyd drew attention to the fund raising by HS2 Action Alliance for an appeal against the judgment of the recent Judicial Review. This had found that the Government had failed to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment, but that it was premature to challenge this. Given that a proper SEA would test a number of options against their environmental impact, and given the urgent need to relieve the

blight and uncertainty in the Parish caused by HS2, it was resolved **to support the Appeal with £1000**, provided there was no further liability if the case were lost. (Cllr Lloyd declared an interest, as the Chairman of HHAG, and abstained from voting.)

### ***9.3 Greenway***

Mr Hickin reported on a meeting that took place on 18 April with Mrs Hills (Greenway Trust), and Messrs Harte and Keaney of Solihull MBC. A confidential plan has been developed to create access at the Berkswell Station end of the Greenway. SMBC emphasised that there would need to be clear local support if compulsory powers were to be exercised. Cllr Lloyd reiterated the observation made at the 14 March meeting that the railway siding in the yard was no longer active, so a route through there was feasible.

It was noted that HS2 Ltd intended to create a route through the station carpark, and were open to proposals for finding a "positive legacy" from the HS2 scheme. It was agreed to **put Greenway access on the agenda for the June meeting.**

Mr Hubbard reported that HS2 Ltd were trying to minimise impact on the Greenway in the Waste Lane area by putting HS2 in a retained cutting for minimum land-take.

Cllr Lloyd proposed that the Council contribute £100 to become a member of the Greenway Trust and to support their website. This was approved, but the Council should avoid becoming a trustee.

### ***9.4 Direction signs - Carol Green***

A proposal from Cllr Burrow that the Council should accept the supplier chosen by Solihull MBC for the two fingerpost signs was adopted. An amendment from Cllr Lloyd that we should ask for the signs to match the style and detailing of the fingerpost at the Berkswell crossroad was rejected.

### ***9.5 Birmingham Airport Airspace Change consultation***

Since the last meeting, the consultation on Runway 15 departures had been extended and the Airport Company had produced an Option 6. This reinstated the Hampton Turn, albeit further south than at present. This appeared to answer the concerns of residents in Balsall Common, and it was agreed **Cllr Lloyd should respond supporting Option 6.** However, the stance of Hampton residents was unknown at present, and it was agreed they should be supported if they wanted to press for moving the turning points further north.

### ***9.6 Approval of annual accounts***

It was proposed and agreed to approve the Annual Accounts.

### ***9.7 Flooding on Benton Green Lane***

Cllr Meeson reported there was recurrent flooding opposite Benton Green Farm. It was suggested he talk to Neil Thomas at Solihull MBC, and get the residents to fill in the flooding survey. Cllr Lloyd suggested the flooding might be due to a water main problem.

### ***9.8 Spirit of Berkswell website***

Cllr Lock gave an explanation of the website being developed by Rev Bratton, which would be able to host the websites of all local organisations. This could reduce costs and provide better cross-linkage. It was agreed that Cllr Lock should continue the dialogue about incorporating the Council's website, provided that full control of it could

be retained. Mr Felthouse reported that the History Group had decided to stay outside the scheme, because of fears about losing control of their material.

### **9.9 Village Green - oak posts**

Cllr Lock reported that Solihull MBC has recommended the fitment of several oak posts at each of the three corners, in order to deter encroachment by vehicles onto the Green. Similar posts are suggested to define the entrance to the Spinney carpark to protect pedestrians. It was agreed the Council would support the introduction of posts, subject to seeing a detailed proposal beforehand. Mr Ebbans suggested there should be carpark signs at the entrance itself, and this was also supported.

### **9.10 Councillors' area reports**

Cllr Burrow reported that he had escorted the judge for the Best Kept Village competition around the Parish on 7 May. It had been an extensive tour, taking in the Windmill (which had recently had the cap and sails reinstalled). In preparation for the judging, a brochure had been prepared and there had been a further clear-up.

Mr Hickin proposed that Cllr Burrow be thanked for all his efforts, which all agreed.

Cllr Hitchcock advised that there was a licensing application for the sales of alcohol at the Total station between the hours of 07:00 to 23:00. In discussion, it was felt there were no clear grounds for opposing this, as other outlets had the same hours.

Cllr Hitchcock reported that the unauthorised Travellers encampment in Meriden had now been cleared, and congratulated the local people there for their campaign that had lasted for 1089 days.

Cllr Lock advised that we should be ready for the start of the HS2 consultation on the Environmental Statement. There had been discussions already about a special edition of the *Bugle*, and asked Mr Felthouse to remind the team about this.

## **10. Forthcoming meetings**

There will be an extraordinary meeting of the Council on Wednesday 15 May at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall Committee Room, Balsall Common.

The Annual Parish Meeting will be in the Reading Room, Berkswell on Thursday 23 May at 7:45 pm, followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Berkswell Society.

The next ordinary meeting of the Council will follow a Planning Committee meeting on Thursday 20 June at about 7:45 pm in the Jubilee Centre, Balsall Common.

The Annual Parish Barbeque will be on 1 June - it will not be preceded by a church fête this year.

## **11. Annual Meeting business**

### **11.1 Delegation arrangements**

Arrangements were agreed as shown in the Appendix. The Planning Committee and Staff Committee were retained.

The existing Working Parties for Health and Safety, and for Cost Reduction, were retained.

### **11.2 Terms of reference of committees**

The remit of the Planning Committee was confirmed to be: "the discharge of the Council's functions with regard to Planning (and similar) Applications".

The remit of the Staff Committee was confirmed as: "the day to day management of the contractual relationship between the Council and the Clerk; advice to the Council on issues relating to the substantive terms of employment for Council employees; no involvement in the day to day allocation of work to the Clerk by the Council, except within the broader context of performance monitoring and enhancement".

***11.3 Nominations to existing committees***

All existing nominations were retained, as shown in the Appendix. Cllr Lock was proposed and elected to join the Staff Committee.

***11.4 New committees***

No new committees were considered necessary.

***11.5 Review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.***

It was noted that the Code of Conduct had not yet been incorporated in Standing Orders, as resolved at the meeting on 12 September 2012. It was agreed Cllr Lloyd would update the orders for approval at the next meeting.

Cllr Burrow reported that he was working with Cllr Benton on a further revision of the Financial regulations, in order to clarify the functions of the Responsible Financial Officer.

***11.6 Review of arrangements with other local authorities***

It was understood the *Local Council Charter*, adopted by Solihull MBC on 8 April 2008, was still in force, although the Solihull Area Committee of WALC has been working on a new Charter.

***11.7 Review of representation on external bodies and arrangements for reporting back***

Representation on outside bodies was agreed as shown in the Appendix. In a number of cases, it was decided to designate Councillors as contact points for Liaison rather than Representatives of the Council.

It was agreed that improvements needed to be made in the way that representatives reported back to the Council.

***11.8 Review of inventory of land and assets***

The Asset Register dated 21 June 2012 was reviewed. It was agreed the list needed a further depth of detail, with additional columns to show value; evidence of ownership; insured value; proof of insurance; and risk assessment.

***11.9 Review of insurance***

It was agreed this needed to be done thoroughly, and insurance information should be shown on the Asset Register.

***11.10 Review of membership of other bodies***

The Council is currently a member of WALC and CPRE, and is planning to join the Greenway Trust. Discussion of membership of the Open Spaces Society was deferred.

***11.11 Review of complaints procedure***

**Cllr Burrow agreed to review** standing orders and obtain a model procedure from WALC or write one if necessary.

***11.12 Review of information handling***

**Cllr Burrow agreed to review** the Council's procedures for handling requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998, as for the complaints procedure (above).

***11.13 Review of press/ media***

It was agreed that current Standing Orders are adequate.

**12. Accounts for Payment**

The following payments were approved:

	Cheque	Amount	VAT
Ian Geddes, website update	1515	£23.63	
The Bugle, replacement cheque	1516	£100.00	
WALC, Cllr Howles course 18 May	1517	£50.00	
J Hool, attendance at meeting	1518	£267.20	
Andrew Green, hedge trimming	1519	£60.00	
GR Mowing, cutting	1520	£174.00	

It was agreed to continue making a grant to Berkswell Village Stores of £500.

**13. Date and format of the Annual Parish Meeting**

Cllr Lock undertook to prepare an agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting that would take place on 23 May 2013 at 7.45 pm in the Reading Room. It would be combined with the Annual General Meeting of the Berkswell Society. At least two guest speakers are planned.

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## Appendix

<b>Committees and Representation</b>									
		Benton	Burrow	Hitchcock	Howles	Lock	Lloyd	Meeson	comments
Committee	Planning	*		#	*	*	*	*	
Committee	Staffing		*		*	*	*	*	
Working party	Health & safety & risk								
Working party	Cost saving	*	*		*		*		
Representation	Airport Consultative Committee						*		d
Representation	Balsall & Berkswell Jubilee Project						*	*	
Representation	Kenilworth Greenway Trust						*	*	d
Representation	HHAG			*					
Representation	HS2 Community Forum (and SHCC)			*					d
Representation	Solihull Area Committee of WALC						*		
Representation	Solihull Tree Wardens Group			*			*		
Liaison	Balsall PC		comm's	environ't	planning				
Liaison	Berkswell Charities							*	
Liaison	Berkswell Museum					*			
Liaison	Berkswell Society		*			*			
Liaison	Lant Trust & Reading Room	*						*	
Liaison	Local Access Forum & RoW						*		
Liaison	Rural Partnership Forum						*	*	
Liaison	Sport/ Leisure/ Football Club			*					
Liaison	WM Police							*	

\* member

# member normally excused attendance

d daytime meetings