

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell,  
held in the Jubilee Centre, Balsall Common, on  
14th November 2013 at 7:45 pm**

**1. Attendance**

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

Borough Cllr Dicicco, Mr Cairns, Ms Cambage, Mr Dymond, Mr Hickin, Mr Lupton, and Ms Melling of Flourish Partnership (see item 6).

**2. Apologies**

Borough Cllr Bell.

**3. Declarations of interest**

None.

**4. Confirmation of minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 October 2013 were confirmed as accurate and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere**

Cllr Hitchcock said that the works on the Kenilworth Road associated with the re-building of the Balsall Common Service Station were causing traffic chaos. This was supported by Cllr Meeson and others. Cllr Hitchcock said these matters should be included in the Planning Consent Conditions, and advised the Environmental Protection Act 1990 should be studied in relation to Planning Applications.

Cllr Lloyd said he thought that the street works were under the control of the Highways Authority and the utility undertakers, and he thought they would fall outside the planning process. It was agreed to **invite Mr A Prior of Solihull MBC to the next meeting.**

**6. Public opinion and Borough Councillor's report**

The Chairman invited Ms Lynn Melling of Flourish Partnership to address the meeting. She explained there was funding available for a feasibility study of renewable energy generation up to a value of £20,000. If the study led to an actual project, further funding up to £150,000 would be available. Partners would be needed to implement any scheme.

Cllr Lock pointed out that new public buildings were an opportunity, and that anaerobic digestion systems had been looked at by Berkswell Estate. Cllr Lloyd reminded the meeting of (the withdrawn) Planning Application 2007/ 2259 for electrical generation from waste wood at Hawkhurst Moor Farm.

Ms Melling said that she would be able to give further information on what would be available after a Government announcement on 5 December. Profits from a scheme would go to the community. The Chairman thanked her for her presentation.

Mr Hickin raised the question of access to the Greenway from Berkswell Station. Solihull MBC had been looking at the options, and it appears upgrading of the footpaths

was now less favoured, and a direct route through the carpark was preferred. It was **agreed to put the matter on the next Agenda.**

Mr Hickin also reported there had been a meeting to discuss a possible parish fête weekend. This would include the BBQ, and the weekend of June 14/ 15 was likely.

Mr Cairns reported that a fence, taken down for at the time of the recent Lions bonfire in Meeting House Lane, needed to be replced.

Mr Hickin reported he had discussed the future of the field adjacent to the Blessed Robert Grissold church with members of the congregation. Mr Joe Martin was a local contact, while the administrator at the Archdiocese remained Mr Scanlan. Cllr Lloyd said the letter to the Archdiocese, discussed had at the last meeting, had not been sent due to the course of events (see §9 below).

Ms Cambage expressed concern about Barretts Lane Farm, which was currently untenanted and insecure.

## **7. Finance**

### ***7.1 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>
1612	The Bugle	£100.00		Winter edition
1613	The Hornets	£1,250.00		Donation
1614	Jubilee Centre	£4,000.00		Donation
1615	Cllr Howles	£100.00		In lieu of fees Mrs Holdsworth
1616	Blythe Liggins	£240.00	£40.00	SWS Legal Fees re agreement
1617	J Caffery	£50.00		Transporting PC equip and docs

### ***7.2 Report of Cost Saving Working Party***

It was resolved to accept the report of the Working Party dated 9 October, which had analysed expenditure and identified potential savings in Administration, Public Safety, and Maintenance, with six recommended actions.

It was agreed this could go on the website after further work on next year's budget and minor redaction.

### ***7.3 Museum Electricity***

The Standing Order amount had been reduced, and a smart meter would be fitted when access was possible.

### ***7.4 Budget virement***

It was resolved to transfer £2500 from Specific Reserve to Category 1c Clerk's Salary (Other).

### ***7.5 Annual return***

The Return had been accepted by the external auditor without qualification, and had been posted on the notice boards.

## **8. Correspondence received, not covered elsewhere**

The War Memorials trust has written with advice on preservation of memorials and possible grants. The grants relate to repair and restoration rather than maintenance, and no immediate action was felt necessary.

Correspondence had been received from residents concerning Pound Close (see §14 below).

## **9. Neighbourhood development**

### ***9.1 Proposed development of church field, Meeting House Lane***

Following the opposition to the proposed development expressed at the last meeting, C-Zero Ltd announced they would recommend the Archdiocese do not proceed with the scheme. Consequently the Council had not written the intended letter, but it was now resolved **the Chairman would write to the Archdiocese to ask for their views on ownership options and how community enjoyment of the field could be preserved.**

### ***9.2 Proposed development by Cassidy, Duggins Lane***

The action decided at the last meeting had not been carried out, and it was confirmed the Council would **write to Cassidy and Solihull MBC saying it was minded to support a residential development, but with a 50% split between "affordable" and "market" dwellings, and with improvements to the proposed layout.**

### ***9.3 Neighbourhood planning***

Cllr Howles explained she was still waiting for Balsall PC to clarify matters with Sara James of Solihull MBC, before the proposed joint meeting with one representative from each Parish Council. **Cllr Howles would write again.** A Planning meeting of Balsall PC on 20 November would be another opportunity to progress the matter.

### ***9.4 Solihull MBC consultations***

The papers on the consultation on Social Housing Allocation (closing 6 Dec 2013) were passed to Ms Cambage.

The Council agreed no comment was required on the Community Infrastructure Levy consultation (closing 2 Dec 2013).

## **10. Heritage and community**

### ***10.1 Berkswell Museum***

Cllrs Benton and Lock would attend a meeting on 19 November with the Museum committee. There had been no news of possible support from Solihull MBC. Mr Hickin reported that school visits had ceased because of the perceived risks to children walking from parking places remote from the Museum.

### ***10.2 Notice Boards - Balsall Common centre, British Legion, and at Church***

Mr Green had expressed his satisfaction with the cleaning and posting of new material by Cllr Howles and (former) Cllr Burrow.

It was agreed the notice board near the British Legion needed replacing with a weatherproof board like that in Balsall Common. The facility for public notices needed to be retained. **Cllr Lloyd would write to Solihull MBC to ask for a replacement board.**

### ***10.3 Grass/hedge cutting arrangements***

Recommendations from the Working Party were included in the report, see §7.2.

### ***10.4 Seat on Station Rd***

Correspondence had been received saying that the seat installed half way up Station Rd from the Medical Centre was causing a loss of privacy. The Council was sympathetic

about the problem, but it was an issue for Solihull MBC. Cllr Bell was understood to be investigating the matter.

### ***10.5 RHS Britain in Bloom Contest***

The Council was pleased to accept an offer from Mr Hickin to convene a meeting to arrange on-going action. It was necessary to prepare a photographic dossier of year-round activity, such as bulb planting and recycling.

## **11. HS2**

Concern was expressed about the Solihull MBC response to the Property Compensation consultation, which advocated a 200 m limit on blight compensation. Mr Hickin said this was inconsistent with their own blight report produced by Bruton Knowles in January, which identified loss of value much further away. Cllr Lock said he had written twice to the Leader of Solihull Council on the subject.

It was resolved that the Council should respond to the Property Compensation consultation by supporting the Property Bond scheme proposed by HS2 Action Alliance. **Cllr Lloyd agreed to draft the response.**

The Council had been invited to affiliate to the "51M" group of Local Authorities who are advocating a much cheaper alternative to the HS2 scheme. There was concern this appeared to include 4-tracking of the Beechwood to Stechford section. Cllr Lloyd said he believed the bottle-necks on the section were actually the junctions at New Street and Coventry. It was resolved the Council would affiliate to 51M, and engage with them to discuss local rail improvements. **Cllr Lloyd would write to them.**

The HS2 Bill and supporting documents were expected to be published in the near future. The Council had a duty to make Parliamentary documents available to the Public. The Council had requested two sets of paper documents and a number of memory sticks, and it had been agreed they would be made available in Balsall Common Library.

HS2 Ltd had suggested a further "bilateral" meeting to discuss outstanding issues. It seemed they wanted to meet in private. It was agreed the Council would comply with the request.

## **12. Airport**

This quarter's meeting of the Consultative Committee had been cancelled by the Airport Company, and there was nothing further to report about the Airspace Change proposal.

## **13. Highways (SMBC)**

### ***13.1 Replacement direction signs Carol Green***

No further news.

### ***13.2 Speed restriction signage - Berkswell crossroads***

A report was awaited from Cllr Bell.

### ***13.3 Proposed diversion of footpaths at Cornets End***

Correspondence had been received from Solihull MBC about a possible permanent diversion of paths M217 and M229. These had been diverted for 3 years in 1995, but had not been reinstated. The Council considered the paths should be restored, and **Cllr Lloyd undertook to draft a letter for the Chairman to send.**

### ***13.4 Lorry traffic - Truggist Hill Farm***

As well as the alleged infringement of vehicle width regulations, and the planning issues, the Council had been told the felling of the trees on the Greenway was now being treated as theft. It was agreed **Cllr Diccio would set up a multi-agency meeting with Solihull MBC, Warwickshire CC, and West midlands Police.**

### ***13.5 Street cleaning and trimming***

A report was awaited from Cllr Bell. It was agreed the **Council would write to Mrs Hemmings of Solihull MBC to ask for regular attendance of an officer at meetings.**

### ***13.6 Footpaths***

Cllr Lloyd said he had reported a number of difficulties to Solihull MBC. The most serious were eroded and flooded field entrances on footpaths M192 and M210. One of these issues had been in the Council's report on problems to Solihull MBC a year previously. It was agreed **Cllr Lloyd should draft a letter asking for action.**

### ***13.7 Packhorse Way***

Cllr Lloyd said he had supplied a map to Hampton PC showing the route elongated to go "station to station". He was awaiting formal acceptance of the plans from Hampton PC.

### ***13.8 Flooding***

Recent heavy rain had caused renewed concerns, and correspondence had been received from affected residents in Duggins Lane. The Council had written several times to Solihull MBC asking for action over the concerns that had been identified in their Flooding Survey. Replies were awaited.

### ***13.9 Balsall Common Library Car park***

Solihull MBC had recently fitted a barrier intended to reduce night-time racing around the car park.

## **14. Administration**

### ***14.1 Vacancy on Council***

Ms Cambage had expressed interest in being co-opted onto the Council, and had been given information on what it would involve.

### ***14.2 Recruitment of Clerk***

The Staffing Committee had met the previous day and had prepared an advertisement and Job Description. It was agreed that publicity would be achieved through WALC, notice boards, the Parish magazine, etc., with a closing date of 6 December.

The Committee had agreed on 10 hours per week, on a flexible basis. The provision of an office was still under review, as cost would be a problem.

### ***14.3 Review of Risk priorities***

Cllr Lock reported the tree opposite the Reading Room was the responsibility of the Vicarage. He had got tree surgeons to look at the Spinney, and no obvious problems were found, but he would get further reports.

Cllr Meeson was concerned about the drain at the War memorial and the lack of railing on the Well. **Cllr Meeson would contact Centro about the trip hazard at the bus shelters.**

**14.4 Pound Close play area**

The Chairman reported on correspondence and phone calls that had resulted from the decision to remove the play equipment. The equipment had been obtained in 1997/1998 at a cost of about £5500, but it was understood there were now only 4 children living in the Close. The play area was not owned by the Council. Suggested future uses included continued play, parking, or a nature reserve. **Options would be discussed at the next meeting.**

**14.5 Meeting dates**

It was agreed the Council would meet 10 times a year, alternating between Berkswell and Balsall Common. Dates had already been set for the early part of 2014. The minutes in Berkswell could possibly be shifted to a Wednesday, so they could start earlier. **Cllr Lock agreed to propose dates.**

**15. Next meeting**

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held on 12 December 2013 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 10:02 pm.

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

01676 530362

clerk@berkswellparishcouncil.org.uk

12 December 2013