

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell, held in the Jubilee Centre, Balsall Common, on 20th June 2013 at 8:00 PM

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Benton, Howles, and Meeson.

2. Attendance

Cllrs Burrow (from item 9 onwards), Hitchcock, Lloyd, Lock (Chairman).

Borough Cllrs Bell and Dicicco.

Members of the public: Messrs Cairns and Hubbard, and Ms Deeley (Berkswell Parish) and Messrs Heard, and Tindall (Balsall Parish).

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 9 May 2013, the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 15 May, and the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 6 June were approved as true records of the meetings, and were signed by the Chairman.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere on this agenda

None.

6. Proposal from Linda Deeley re pony patrol

Ms Deeley presented the idea that volunteers could patrol the Parish by pony, looking out for problems like litter and graffiti. They would wear high-visibility jackets. An element of sponsorship would be required, but this raised the issue of whether public liability insurance would be needed. Cllr Bell thought it might be possible to include the volunteers in Solihull MBC Environmental Champions scheme.

Councillors were generally supportive, and it was agreed that **all parties would investigate further** and exchange ideas before the next meeting.

7. Public opinion and Borough Councillors' reports

Cllr Bell reported on a range of issues. Some signs were to be put up about dog fouling in Benton Green Lane, though it was felt that the culprit had now been identified.

He had reported the strong views about HS2 expressed at the Annual Parish Meeting back to Solihull MBC.

The Solihull MBC Local Plan was still being Examined, but parts of it were to be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman by a resident.

Cllr Diccico advised that Caroline Spelman MP had arranged a meeting in Hampton on 27th June, at which the CAA would describe the rules regarding route changes for aircraft departing the Airport. He said she was disappointed with the way the Airport had conducted the Consultation, with incomplete information, and the late release of "Option 6". On HS2, he said she was still pushing for a tunnel in the Berkswell Station area, and for a compensation scheme that included a Property Bond.

Mr Tindall said he was one of a number of people who had written to her urging her to vote against the pending HS2 Preparation Bill. Without any cap on the planned expenditure, this was effectively a "blank cheque" for the project.

Regarding street cleaning, Cllr Diccico said Bruce Brant (Neighbourhood Coordinator) had been away, but this was now being progressed with him. Mr Hubbard said that the Kelsey Lane traffic lights were obscured by a tree, and asked for this to be trimmed.

Cllr Diccico would investigate. Cllr Lloyd said he had written to Mr Brant about tree and hedge trimming that was needed along the A452.

8. Heritage and community

It was agreed to carry over to the next meeting the question of whether the Council needed to have a formal review with the Berkswell Museum. The cost of the electricity, that the Council paid, had been reduced by negotiation. The History Group benefited from the Council's support, as they used the Museum for archive storage. It was agreed the Museum cost should be included in the budget review for next year.

Cllrs Lock and Meeson reported informal discussions with Berkswell Charities. It had been agreed that there might be savings if the various grass-cutting contracts in the Parish were rationalised. At present, the Council, the Church, the Charities, and the School all work separately.

It was agreed to put renewal of the subscription to the Open Spaces Society (£45.00) on the next agenda.

There was no update on the situation regarding new direction signs at Carol Green.

Cllr Lock said he would progress the key for the Balsall Common Notice Board.

9. HS2

(Cllr Burrow joined the meeting at this point.)

Cllr Lloyd reminded the Council that the consultations on the Draft Environment Statement and Design Refinement would end on 11 July. The Code of Construction Practice is included in the consultation. There was a large amount of information to comment on, and a framework and check-list had been prepared.

Cllr Lock pointed out the omission from the maps of the construction haul route through Balsall Common, and the fact that the cumulative impacts of construction in the two adjacent HS2 area had not been estimated. Cllr Hitchcock pointed out the issues that would arise from the large work compounds and depots. He had also had no satisfactory response from HS2 Ltd regarding the risk of bird-strikes on the trains near the Marsh Lane reserve. Cllr Lloyd said that HS2 Ltd acknowledged considerable work was still in progress, and there would be a further consultation on the Formal Environmental Statement in the New Year.

Cllr Lock reported on a meeting on 12 June between representatives of the parish councils of Balsall, Barston, Berkswell, Bickenhill, and Hampton and the leader of Solihull MBC and the chairman of their Working Party. The Local Councils emphasised the campaign to get a realignment and tunnel in our area would continue, and that they could help Solihull MBC get their messages across - provided there was good news to convey.

The Local Councils suggested the Solihull response to the consultations could be used as a template. They also proposed there should be some process to indicate the degree of community support for the Solihull MBC response, which apparently was something HS2 Ltd would find helpful. Borough councillors Bell and Diccico **agreed to progress ways in which local people could be more involved in the dealings between HS2 Ltd and Solihull MBC.**

Solihull MBC has requested an extension to the consultation period, and they seemed supportive of the market-value Property Bond proposed by HS2 Action Alliance. This also seemed to be gaining support from our MP, with whom Cllr Lock was in discussion.

There was some relief that HS2 Ltd were standing by the choice of Washwood Heath for the Maintenance Depot, and were not re-considering a green-field location.

The result of the appeal on the Judicial Review concerning the Strategic Environmental Assessment and other aspects of HS2 was not yet known.

Cllr Lloyd reminded everyone of the StopHS2 national convention in Stafford on 29 June.

10. Airport

Cllr Lloyd reported the responses to the consultation on the Airspace Change proposal were being considered. The Airport Company had stated at the Consultative Committee on 12 June that no further options were being considered. However, Mrs Spelman was trying to get the Airport to look seriously at a further proposal from residents in Hampton and Balsall. (See also report from Borough Councillor Diccico in §7 above.)

The Airport has made a proposal to the Airports Commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies, for a second runway north-east of Stonebridge roundabout. Little detail is available, but it seems likely that departing aircraft would over-fly Berkswell village. The associated press release states the "vision" has local support.

It was agreed **the Council should write to the Commission**, objecting to the proposal. The letter would be copied to Cllr Bell, so the salient points could be used in a response from the Leader of Solihull MBC.

11. Footpaths

Cllr Lloyd reported that a number of overgrowth and cropping issues had been reported to the Highway Authority.

The named route to Hampton-in-Arden had been agreed with their parish council, and a design for a waymark disc was being developed.

The donation had gone to the Greenway Trust and the Council would become a member from 1 July. The AGM had been attended on 3 June, and the Trust is progressing options for cycle and bridle access at the Berkswell Station end.

12. Street maintenance

A number of issues were dealt with in the reports from Borough Councillors Bell and Diccio (see §7 above.)

Bruce Brant was understood to be working on the ditch and pothole issues on the Coventry Road, and also the oak posts for the Village Green.

Cllr Lock said he had a letter ready to send to the School about the problem with parking in Church Lane.

Cllr Lock had spoken to the Police about enforcement of width restrictions on our roads. The advice was that they needed to have vehicle registrations and dates/ times of the alleged offences. Hodgetts Lane was not width-restricted, except at the Truggist Lane junction. **He would discuss this inconsistency with Bruce Brant.**

Anti-social behaviour in the Library Car Park was discussed. It was reported that litter had been cleared from the emergency exit from the Jubilee Centre, but it was not possible to remove the handrail panelling as this was a functional part. Mr Heard reported continuing concerns from residents of Green Lane about joy-riding in the car park at night, and it was agreed **the Council would write to Solihull MBC on their behalf, to ask for rumble strips in the north end turning space.**

13. Neighbourhood planning

Discussion of the NDP and Community Right to Bid were deferred to the next meeting.

14. Administration

Procedures for handling Complaints and Freedom of Information and Data Protection requests **would be discussed at the next meeting.**

It was agreed the Council would not subscribe to the WALC Direct Information Service.

The form to order the *Local Council Administration* 9th edition, August 2013, had not yet been received from WALC.

The Working Party to look into cost savings for 2014-15 has not yet convened.

Cllrs Burrow and Meeson were working on the list of identified Risks in order to establish priorities.

15. Accounts for Payment

The following payments were approved:

	Cheque	Amount	VAT
Cllr Burrow, printing and binders	1533	£125.84	£18.48
Mr J Caffery, April and May	1534	£153.00	
2nd Balsall Common Scout Group	1535	£800.00	
GR Mowing, July - August	1596	£348.00	£58.00

16. Next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held on 25 July 2013 at 7:45 pm in the Reading Room, Berkswell.

17. Exclusion of public

It was resolved to exclude the public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s 1(2) because confidential staffing matters were to be discussed.

(Separate confidential section follows, making a total of 6 pages.)

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