

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Berkswell,  
held in the Reading Room, Berkswell,  
on Thursday 23rd May 2013 at 7:45 pm**

**1. Attendance**

Cllr Lock (Chairman).

50 electors of the Parish including Borough Cllr Bell and Parish Cllrs Burrow, Hitchcock, Howles, Lloyd, and Meeson.

Messrs Felthouse, Heard, and Tindall (Balsall Parish).

Mr A Prior (Head of Highway Services, Solihull MBC).

**2. Apologies**

Cllr Benton.

**3. Confirmation of minutes of Parish Meeting held on 17 May 2012**

The minutes were taken as read, approved as an accurate record, and signed by the chair of the meeting, Cllr Lock. He reported that all issues that had been discussed had been taken up by the Parish Council.

**4. Chairman's report**

The Chairman announced that his report had been published on the Parish Council website, would be featured in the next edition of the *Bugle*, and paper copies were available on request. He proposed that the meeting should proceed to the discussion of current issues rather than look back over the past year.

**5. Matters raised by electors**

**5.1 HS2**

Mr M Beasley enquired about the current position of Solihull councillors on HS2. Cllr Bell said the Solihull MBC support of the scheme was dependent on satisfactory compensation and mitigation. Both are now looking inadequate. The current viaduct drawings looked horrendous, whereas we'd been promised "a thing of beauty". He added the proposed tunnel had been rejected because of hydrology, cost, and spoil, none of which were unforeseen. Mr Beasley said he was aware the Chair of the SMBC Working Party was "disappointed" with the latest developments, and said the current Environmental Statement consultation was an opportunity for SMBC and Caroline Spelman to protest. Cllr Lock pointed out we did not feature in the Design Refinement consultation, because the design in our area was unchanged.

**Cllr Bell undertook to ask SMBC to review their position**, given the inadequate mitigation. Mr S Green said this should be put more forcibly.

Mr Prior of SMBC said he would be pleased to handle issues regarding Highways.

Cllr Burrow had brought along a set of the latest HS2 Ltd consultation documents, and gave an overview of the latest information: Truggist Lane would have a "severe" impact from construction traffic; there would be 6 to 8 weeks of night work on the viaduct at Berkswell Station; Lavender Hall Lane was to be closed for 12 months; areas near the line would get a continuous-equivalent noise level of 50 - 55 dB  $L_{Aeq}$ ; the Greenway

would be destroyed by construction traffic; the main work camp would be at Park Lane with smaller sites elsewhere.

Mr R Hubbard said the Waste Lane bridge would be one of the first items to be built, requiring a lengthy road closure.

Mr S Green said the impact on local roads was unbelievable. The scheme was now into a political phase, and we needed to know what Solihull MBC and our MP were going to do to protect our interests.

Mr N Childs pointed out it was 24 months to the next General Election and that support for a candidate opposed to HS2 was an approach likely to get results. He suggested UKIP was the obvious party opposed to HS2, with which other residents concurred. Mr W Bailey asked who would be prepared to vote for UKIP, to which a large number of people raised their hands.

Cllr Lock asked Cllr Bell to get Solihull MBC to push for additional information events by HS2 Ltd to support the current consultation. Cllr Bell said the Working Party had already complained that the one in Hampton was insufficient.

Cllr Meeson said the Parish Council had been challenging HS2 for 3 years and had written to the Prime Minister. The scheme could be stopped, and Borough Councillors needed to get involved.

Cllr Lloyd said the Solihull MBC Working Party had not supported his call for the consultation to be extended to 20 weeks, and pointed out the Environmental Statement did not appear to refer to the tunnel proposal and more easterly alignment that had been urged on Solihull MBC and Mrs Spelman last autumn. Cllr Bell said three tunnels of varying length had been considered by HS2 Ltd, and even the shortest had not been accepted. Cllr Lock said the parish needed to keep pushing for a tunnel.

Mr L Hare-Scott asked whether there was news about compensation. Cllr Lloyd said applicants still had to prove Exceptional Hardship, and that for people more remote from the line, they would have to wait 20 years for statutory blight compensation.

Cllr Meeson remarked that the former Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond, had realised the depth of opposition when he had met local representatives in Coleshill in October 2010. Mr D Stableforth pointed out the mass action engendered by the Mine proposal, and said a few supporters should be able to organise a mass letter-writing campaign. Cllr Burrow asked volunteers to put their names on the sheets provided.

Mr K Tindall said he had attended every meeting of the Solihull MBC Working Party, and he was disappointed by the lack of awareness and influence shown by its members. Only political pressure would change the situation.

In answer to questioning by the Chairman, **Cllr Bell said he would report the dissent expressed at the meeting** to Solihull Council, would point out the scheme was less beneficial than thought, that the mitigation and compensation were inadequate, and that they needed to re-evaluate their stance.

## ***5.2 Parking problems in Church Lane***

Mrs Hobley complained about long-stay parking by school staff that had resulted in residents receiving parking tickets. It was thought there was adequate long-stay parking only a short distance from the school. Mrs P Green suggested residents' parking permits. Mr P Jagger said the situation was chaotic and he was unable to access his

property for extended periods. Mr Prior said Solihull MBC was aware of the issues and would be responding on both the penalties and the underlying problems.

**5.3 Anti-social behaviour, Balsall Common Library Car Park**

Mr W Heard of Balsall Common Village Residents' Association said he'd notified both parish councils of major disturbances, joy-riding, and littering that were occurring at night in the Library car park. Cllrs Hitchcock and Meeson were trustees of the Jubilee Project and said the problems were unrelated to the Youth Club and had been discussed with the Police and Solihull MBC. Cllr Lock said **the issue would be put on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting.**

**5.4 Litter, Balsall Common**

Mr S Green said that mechanical sweeping of the village centre and litter picking of adjacent streets were appreciated, but they failed to deal with litter accumulations in recesses that needed manual clearing. Cllr Bell **would report this to SMBC,** and Cllr Lock **would put street cleaning on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting.**

**5.5 Enforcement of width restrictions on roads**

Mr M Hickin complained about heavy vehicles using Lavender Hall Lane, despite the width restriction. Cllr Lock was concerned about wide construction vehicles using Back Lane to reach the Banner Lane site. Mr S Green and Mr D Stableforth said the width restrictions on Station Road and Truggist Lane were ignored. Cllr Lloyd said he had copies of all the Width Restriction Orders in the Parish, and would circulate them.

**Mr Prior agreed to report back on enforcement of width restrictions.**

**5.6 Dog fouling**

Mrs M Blair said that dog fouling was getting very bad in Benton Green Lane and asked for signs to be erected. Cllr Lock said the Parish Council should also ask for dog waste bins, as well. **Cllr Bell would refer the dog fouling problems to Solihull MBC.**

The meeting closed at 9:10 pm, followed by a break for light refreshments, and the Annual General Meeting of the Berkswell Society. Thanks were expressed to Mrs J Smitten for providing the refreshments, and the parish council would make a donation to a local charity of her choice.

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

01676 530362

clerk@berkswellparishcouncil.org.uk

**XX May 2014**