

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell, held in the Reading Room, Berkswell, on 25th July 2013 at 8:00 PM

1. Attendance

Cllrs Burrow (AB), Hitchcock (DH), Howles (KH), Lloyd (RL), and Meeson (KM).

Members of the public: Mr Bowman, Mr and Mrs Cadden, Mr Cairns, Mr Dymond, Mr Gilbert, Mr and Mrs Green, Mr Mansur, Mr and Mrs Neale, Mr Tidy, Mr Turkeltob and Mr M Taylor (Coventry).

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Benton and Lock. In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr Howles presided.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Confirmation of minutes

It was agreed to defer confirmation of the minutes of the meetings held on 20 June and 11 July till the next meeting.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes not covered elsewhere

None.

6. Public opinion and Borough Councillor's report

Mr N Bowman of the 2nd Balsall Common Scout Group addressed the meeting to express his thanks for the donation from the Council toward the purchase of a canoe. Both parish councils had contributed and two canoes had been purchased. These had been named *Balsall* and *Berkswell*. He explained how the canoes had enabled scouts to achieve their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's awards. Members thanked Mr Bowman for his on-going work with the Scouts.

Mr Green reported that Balsall Common village centre had been cleaned the previous day by Solihull MBC, but he still believed there was a need for a cleaner with a brush and shovel to clear difficult areas, and this should be funded by the two parish councils.

A number of residents from Duggins Lane and Lant Close expressed their concern about the outline plans for the building of 33 "affordable" houses at 205 Duggins Lane. (The plans had been presented to the Council's Planning Committee on 20 June.) It was felt the scheme was over-intensive and would cause difficulties for traffic, parking, schooling, health services, and policing. The area had inadequate public transport. A previous scheme (2012/108) had been withdrawn after similar objections (Planning Committee meeting 22 March 2012).

Cllr Howles stated that these issues were the Council's highest priority, but objections to planning applications had to be made on substantive planning issues. It seemed unlikely there was a demonstrable local need for this number of "affordable" dwellings.

Residents expressed concern that the development was being supported by Coventry City Council, even though there were substantial nearby developments at Banner Brook and Tanyard Farm. An email from Cllr Skinner of Westwood Ward would be forwarded to Cllr Burrow. It was agreed that **Cllr Burrow would discuss all aspects of the proposed development with Borough Cllr Bell.**

The site was now being cleared, and the trees had been cut down. The total of 33 planned houses was excessive, bearing in mind the present total of 45 properties in Duggins Lane and 21 in Lant Close. Cllr Meeson emphasised the Council had a good record of fighting all inappropriate developments.

7. Heritage and community

Mr Dymond said he thought the grass cutting in the churchyard was more complicated than the mowing of open areas, and was not suitable for inclusion in an overall maintenance package for the parish. Cllr Burrow explained the Council would like to know what arrangements were in place in order to see if any rationalisation was possible.

It was agreed to renew the Council's membership of the Open Spaces Society at a cost of £45.00.

Cllr Hitchcock said the Council's membership of the Marsh Lane Nature Reserve had lapsed, and he would get renewal paperwork.

Cllr Burrow reported that Solihull MBC were still planning to replace the direction signs at Carol Green.

An estimate of £350 had been received from Hubbard and Sons for repairs to the Stocks. It was understood the work had been agreed with English Heritage, and it was resolved to accept the quotation, subject to everything being agreeable to the Conservation authorities.

Discussions about Berkswell Museum, the Notice Board in Balsall Common centre, and the proposal for a Pony Patrol were deferred to the next meeting.

8. HS2

The Council agreed a response to the consultation on the draft Environmental Statement at its meeting on 11 July, and this had been submitted.

Cllr Lloyd reported that the appeal against the findings of the Judicial Review of environmental matters had not been successful, but HS2 Action Alliance was preparing a further appeal to the Supreme Court. One of the three appeal judges had supported the argument that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should have been carried out.

Cllr Lloyd said he had just come from a meeting of the Solihull MBC HS2 Working Party, where he had urged Solihull MBC to carry on studying the environmental impacts in readiness for the consultation on the formal Environmental Statement in the New Year.

Mr Green said that the recent increase in the cost estimate to £50 Bn had resulted in a further loss of support for the project.

9. Airport

Cllr Lloyd reported that the Airport Company was still deliberating on the Airspace Change proposals.

A letter, critical the proposed 2nd runway near Packington, had been sent by the Chairman to the Airports Commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies.

Cllr Lloyd said that the diversion works on the A45 were nearing completion, which would allow construction of the runway extension to start. The diversion of the highway included the provision of new carriageways for busses. He had also had the opportunity to visit the new maintenance hanger being built by Monarch Airways. It could accommodate two 777 aircraft, and was a major investment that would create skilled employment. Other news from the Airport was that Air India would be re-opening the Delhi route in August, and would be the first airline to bring Boeing 787 aircraft to the airport.

10. Footpaths

Cllr Lloyd said that some problems had been corrected but overgrowth remained a common problem for path users.

A design was being developed for waymark discs for the named route to Hampton-in-Arden.

11. Street maintenance

No further updates had been received on street cleaning, hedge trimming, width restrictions, and anti-social use of the Balsall Common Library car park.

Cllr Lloyd advised that he had been in contact with Solihull MBC, Defra, and Network Rail about the spread of ragwort, which is poisonous to grazing animals.

12. Neighbourhood planning

It was reported the Solihull Local Plan would be approved by the inspector in the near future.

A response was awaited from Solihull MBC on the Council's proposed basis for a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Cllr Howles said that six possible policies had been outlined, and a meeting would be arranged with Solihull MBC. The Council remained committed to producing an NDP, but members wanted to make sure that effort and resources were focused on areas where an approved Plan would make a significant difference to the outcome of development proposals.

13. Planning

13.1 2013/975 4 Benton Green Lane

Change of use from grazing to hard standing - the Council objects: no indication of purpose or drainage arrangements.

13.2 2013/984 Church Fields, Lavender Hall Lane

Felling of two pine trees - trimming should be sufficient and the Council objects to the removal off these trees.

13.3 2013/1038 Banbury Cottage Church Lane

Felling of Norway Spruce - no objection.

It was agreed **Cllr Lloyd would notify Solihull MBC of the Council's comments.**

14. Administration

Cllrs Burrow and Meeson had arranged to review the identified risk areas on Sunday August 4.

Discussion of working procedures for Complaints, Freedom of Information, and Data Protection requests was deferred. The Working Party seeking cost savings in 2014-15 had not yet convened.

15. Payment of invoices

It was resolved to pay the following invoices:

Chq no	Supplier	Gross	VAT	Reason
1597	WALC	£61.85		<i>Local Council Administration</i> 9th ed
1598	SMBC	£238.00	£47.60	Assistance for Risk Assessment
1599	GR Dawson	£570.00	£114.00	Mowing churchyard

16. Next meeting

The next Ordinary Meeting of the Council will be held on 5 September 2013, at 7:45 pm in the Jubilee Centre, Station Road, Balsall Common.

Cllr G Lock

Chairman of the Parish Council

Beehive Cottage

Lavender Hall Lane

Berkswell

CV7 7BL

01676 530362

clerk@berkswellparishcouncil.org.uk

5 August 2013