

BERKSWELL PARISH COUNCIL – ORDINARY MEETING 18 JUNE 2020

Clerk to Berkswell Parish Council
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TO ALL PARISH COUNCILLORS

Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell to be held virtually using the Zoom video conferencing facility on Thursday 18 June 2020 at 7:15pm for the purpose of transacting the following business. Instructions to Councillors and members of the public wishing to attend this meeting are available on the Berkswell Parish Council website.

Mr R Wilson
Clerk to Berkswell Parish Council

12 June 2020

Guidance on How to Join this meeting

On-line Access

To Join the Meeting from any suitable device (e.g. laptop, smartphone, tablet etc) click on the following link and follow the instructions. **Please allow sufficient time to register as the meeting will start promptly at 7:15pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/72471138859?pwd=OE9ueW1QQkRvY1RwMDR5bHA4b2w4QT09>

When requested to do so enter the following:

Meeting ID: 724 7113 8859

Password: 7TUE6T

By Phone

To join the meeting by telephone please call any one of the following numbers:

[0203 481 5240](tel:02034815240)

[0131 460 1196](tel:01314601196)

[0203 051 2874](tel:02030512874)

[0203 481 5237](tel:02034815237)

When requested to do so enter/provide the following:

Meeting ID: 724 7113 8859

Password: 641053

Guidance and tips for participation:

We ask all participants to keep their microphones on Mute unless they are speaking. Our microphones pick up a lot of background noise and when everyone has the microphones unmuted, it can get really noisy.

Using Meeting Controls

We may make use of **Meeting Controls** to ask yes or no questions or for participants to raise their hands digitally if they wish to speak.

To access the Meeting Controls, you will first have to go to the **Participants** view. Below the list of participants' names, you will see the controls shown below, which are fairly self-explanatory.

Please note don't use these controls unless directed to by the facilitator.

Agenda

1. **Attendance**
2. **Apologies for absence**
3. **Acceptance of apologies for absence**
4. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a. To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda
 - b. To receive written requests for disclosing pecuniary interests
 - c. To consider any requests for dispensations as appropriate
 - d. Councillors are reminded to update their Notice of Registrable Interests'. It is a requirement that councillors update the Register within 28 days of a change to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Councillors to note that the current register is available via the following link <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx?ID=235&LS=3>
5. **To approve Minutes of the following meeting:**

Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 19 March 2020
Private Items of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 19 March 2020
6. **Matters arising from the previous meeting requiring attention**
7. **Open Forum**

Parishioners of Berkswell are invited to address the Council on any relevant matter for a maximum of three minutes
8. **Complaint** – Council to agree the outcome of the Clerk's investigation into Sheila Cooper's complaint made on 17th and 18th March 2020 (paper available on the Council's website) with the conclusion that there was no case to answer.
9. **Borough Councillor's Report.**
10. **Casual vacancies/co-option** – Council to note that SMBC have not received any requests for an election due to our 2 casual vacancies, so it will be in order for the Parish Council to co-opt if suitable candidates come forward.
11. **Planning Applications**
 - a. Council to consider reports on potential significant planning violations and agree appropriate reporting action.
 - b. Council to note that it was agreed at the Ordinary Meeting on 13 June 2019 that the Council should continue with the current practice when reviewing planning applications but that all councillors must come prepared to present a reasoned opinion if they have something they wish to discuss. It was agreed to review the success of this approach at the October meeting of the Council.
 - c. Council to consider the following motion: *"This Council delegates authority to the Clerk to respond to any planning notification to highlight those policies of the NDP that apply to the planning application if the Clerk considers the policy significant in relation to the particular application and there is educational value for SMBC planning department in making such a submission. The Clerk will not make any comment to support or oppose the planning application. The Clerk can consult with the Chairman (Cllr Drake), given his role as Secretary of the NDP, if appropriate for guidance. This authority to cease on resumption of monthly meetings of the PC or 12 months whichever is sooner."*
 - d. Council to note the status of correspondence the Clerk has had with SMBC on behalf of the Council during lockdown (previously circulated).
 - e. a list of planning applications is detailed below for Council to discuss possible responses.

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Ref	Location	Proposal	Response Date
2020/01905	Beechwood Cottage Hodgetts Lane Berkswell Solihull	Remove condition No. 2 on planning approval PL/2004/02487/FULL. The menage riding area to be used in conjunction with the related stable yard as Beechwood Cottage has been sold to an unrelated party.	24.06.20

12. Financial Matters

- a. During lockdown the Council has been using the NatWest bank on-line banking App (Bankline) to make payments in accordance with a motion approved under item 14 of the 13 February 2020 meeting to test out the technology. This approval was extended by unanimous consent from the Council by email to avoid the Clerk and councillors being put at risk of contracting Covid-19 by having to arrange to meet to manually sign cheques. This extension was agreed on the understanding that all proposed payments were declared to all Councillors in advance of the payments being made and that a schedule of such payments be presented to the next formal meeting of the Council. The following is a list of payments made under this arrangement:

Payments made	Date	Approval	Payment Method	Gross Amount £	VAT £
R Wilson - Clerk's Salary April 2020	17/04/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	redacted	0
Clerk's expenses reimbursement- Printer paper, printer ink, Google Drive subscription renewal & postage stamps	17/04/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	233.59	36.33
DP Maintenance Services -the supply of materials and labour to repair flagstones by the Notice Board in church lane, Berkswell	21/04/20	Health & Safety	Bank Transfer	55.00	0
J Hickin - payment of 1st instalment of 2020/21 grass mowing contract (£196.88) & agreed additional work re Spencer's Lane roundabout (£26.25)	21/04/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
GR Dawson - graveyard maintenance Jan to March 2020	21/04/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	752.40	125.40
WALC – 2020/21 Annual subscription	28/04/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	868.80	111.80
A Burrow – cost of printing a coronavirus leaflet	27/04/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	134.00	0
RD Wilson – Clerk's May salary	22/05/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	redacted	0
Zurich Insurance – annual renewal of insurance policy	22/05/20	Annual Payment	Bank Transfer	585.60	0
J Hickin – Grounds maintenance contract April instalment	22/05/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
RD Wilson – special delivery postage for HMLR application re Kelsey Lane Bus Stop	22/05/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	7.50	0
Total (excluding Clerk's salary)				3,083.15	273.53

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- b. On-line Payments – Council to formally agree:
- to extend the pilot use of the NatWest Bankline service as the default payment method until further notice.
 - to consider the longer-term use of this facility when face to face meetings are re-introduced.
 - that the Clerk can make an on-line payment at any time, in the absence of a calendar of future meetings, providing the agreed Pilot process continues to be followed.
- c. The following invoice payments presented for approval have been examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.

Invoices for Payment	Approval	Payment Method	Gross Amount £	VAT £
R Wilson - Clerk's Salary June 2020	Admin	Bank Transfer	Redacted	0
Cllr Allowances – Apr to June 2020	Admin	Bank Transfer	473.55	0
HMRC – PAYE/NI Apr to June 2020	Admin	Bank Transfer	815.79	0
J Hickin – Grounds maintenance contract May instalment	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
Packington Estate Enterprises Limited	Annual & Item 27g	Bank Transfer	38.00	0
Total (excluding Clerk's salary)			1,550.47	0

- d. Payments received
- First half of 2020/21 precept – £21,799 on 1 April 2020 from SMBC
 - Covid-19 grant - £3,132 on 15 May 2020 from SMBC
- e. Bank Account balance – Council to note that the council's bank balance as at 8 June 2020 was £72,695.
- f. Grant applications
- Berkswell Society - Council to consider an application for a grant of £500 for the normal summer and autumn planting programme for the 26 planters that the society fund (which excludes the 5 on Berkswell Station and the Station Roundabout for which the PC directly purchases the flowers).
 - Heart of England School - Council to consider a grant request as a contribution to the school's support to students to address issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. Council to consider this request in light of the SMBC Covid-19 financial allocation to the Council. The applicants have indicated that they would be grateful for any amount that councillors deem suitable.
 - Berkswell School – are requesting a grant to support the school in the emergency cost of managing the school's response to the COVID pandemic. The school, unlike many local primary schools, has opened for Key Workers, Year 6, Year 1, Reception and Nursery. The amount requested is £2,321.49.
 - Berkswell Reading Rooms – are requesting a grant to carry out alterations to ensure their readiness to re-open and provide a safe Covid compliant environment. The amount requested is £1,377.
- g. Data protection fee renewal – Council to note that Under the Regulations, we must pay an annual fee of £40 which is due on 22 July 2020. As this is an annually renewable fee Council to agree to setting up a Direct Debit to make this annual payment.

13. Councillor Allowances

- a. Council to note that the Councillor Allowances payable in 2019/20 were as follows: Parish Basic Allowance (PBA) £576.96 p.a.; and Chairman's Allowance £1,153.92. The Councillors eligible to receive PBA in 2019/20 were Cllrs Burrow, Edwards, Hitchcock, Howles, Lloyd, & Cooper. Cllr Drake was eligible to receive a Chairman's Allowance.

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- b. Council to note that, further to agreement under Item 17 of 16 May 2019 meeting, the Clerk has increased the Parish Basic Allowance payable to Parish Councillors from 1 April 2020 to the SMBC recommended value for 2019/20 of £693 p.a. (the 2020/21 rates have not yet been published). The chairman's allowance is now £1,386 p.a. The Councillors eligible to receive PBA in 2020/21 are Cllrs Burrow, Edwards, Howles, & Lloyd. Cllr Drake is eligible to receive a Chairman's Allowance.

14. Internal Audit Report – Council to note the contents of the internal audit report for 2019/20 as circulated (copy will be available on the Council web site).

15. Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 – Council to agree in the affirmative (or by stating NA) the 9 listed statements, in Section 1 of the Annual Return and consequently agree the following motion; “We acknowledge as the members of Berkswell Parish Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, that we have acted in accordance with statements 1 to 8 on Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and that statement 9 is not applicable, with respect to the year ended 31 March 2019”. The Chairman and the Clerk must then sign the Annual Governance Statement.

16. Accounting Statements 2019/20 – Council to note that the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Regulation 12(1) stipulates that the Responsible Financial Officer must sign and date the Accounting Statements to certify that they “properly present receipts and payments”. Council is required to confirm that this has been done and then the Council must, in the following order:

- a. Consider the accounting statements by the members meeting as a whole;
- b. Approve the accounting statements by resolution. Consequently, Council to approve the following motion – “The accounting statements for 2019/20 are approved by this Council”; and
- c. Ensure the accounting statements, having previously been signed by the Clerk, is signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting.

17. Annual Governance and Accountability Return – Council to note that the Annual Return (AGAR) must be submitted to the external Auditors by 31 July 2020.

18. Period for the exercise of public rights – Council to note that, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 require that:

- 1. The accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested, during a period of 30 working days set by the smaller authority that starts on or before 1 September 2020.
- 2. The period referred to in paragraph (1) starts with the day on which the period for the exercise of public rights is treated as having been commenced i.e. the day following the day on which all of the obligations in paragraph (3) below have been fulfilled.
- 3. The responsible financial officer for a relevant authority must, on behalf of that authority, publish (which must include publication on the authority's website):
 - a. the Accounting Statements (i.e. Section 2 of either Part 2 or 3, whichever is relevant, of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR)), accompanied by:
 - i. a declaration, signed by that officer to the effect that the status of the Accounting Statements are unaudited and that the Accounting Statements as published may be subject to change;
 - ii. the Annual Governance Statement (i.e. Section 1 of either Part 2 or Part 3, whichever is relevant, of the AGAR); and
 - b. a statement that sets out
 - i. the period for the exercise of public rights;
 - ii. details of the manner in which notice should be given of an intention to inspect the accounting records and other documents;
 - iii. the name and address of the local auditor;

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- iv. the provisions contained in section 26 (inspection of documents etc.) and section 27 (right to make objections at audit) of the Act, as they have effect in relation to the authority in question;

19. 2019/20 Annual Accounts- Council to note the year end management accounts (attached at Appendix 1)

20. Analysis of S.137 expenditure – Council to note that the total expenditure incurred under S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972 in 2019/20 was £3,630. The maximum expenditure allowed in 2019/20 was £8.12 per elector, i.e. £21,800. Consequently, our S.137 spend was well within the legal limit.

21. Policies and Procedures

- a. The revision of Council’s Standing Orders has now been completed and a new version has been circulated to members of the Council. Council to agree the following motion: *“This Council agrees to adopt the revised Standing Orders with immediate effect”*.

22. Risk Management

- a. Council to discuss any new finance and risk events
- b. Council to agree to review the existing risk framework in light of Covid-19 and new guidance from NALC and BHIB Councils Insurance.
- c. Council to note that, due to Coronavirus, we are overdue an asset inspection which is usually conducted by two councillors together. Council to agree an individual councillor to carry out the next asset inspection.

23. Actions Arising from Previous Meetings

- a. Council to note the status of agreed actions from previous meetings as circulated (a copy is available on the Council website)

24. Correspondence – Council to note an email from Bruce Brant (SMBC) advising of his change of role after a number of years working in the Meriden Ward/Rural area of the Borough as a Neighbourhood Coordinator/ Highway Inspector. (see Item 26a below)

25. Ongoing References

- a. Review of inventory of land and assets
 - i. Kelsey Lane Bus Shelter – Council to note that an application to Register the property has been submitted to HMLR.

26. Training and Meetings

- a. To receive reports from attendance at events and meetings

27. Heritage and Community

- a. Discontinuation of SMBC Neighbourhood Services
 - i. Council to note mail from Bruce Brant advising that Neighbourhood Services department has been abolished and his previous role discontinued
 - ii. Council to agree to write to Bruce Brant thanking him for the significant contribution that he has made to the lives of the residents of Berkswell Parish
 - iii. Council to note Councillor Burrow’s report on the meeting of the Solihull Area Committee (of PCs) which resolved that no PC had received an official communication concerning the abolition of Neighbourhood Services, a few had received informal advice from their ex-neighbourhood coordinator and that not all wards were covered by Neighbourhood Coordinators in the first place. The SAC resolved that the SAC Chairman would take up the matter with SMBC both concerning the communications failure on the reorganisation and the ongoing process for PC communication on specific operational issues with SMBC.
- b. Consultation meeting with LM and HS2 Ltd - Council to note Councillor Burrow’s written report dated 4th June 2020 (previously circulated) on the outcome of the meeting on the temporary closure of footpaths M182, M184 and M186/7 to facilitate the building of the temporary greenway
- c. The Well - Council to note that the level of water in the well has returned to a satisfactory level following the work undertaken by Severn Trent. Council to note that Severn Trent also undertook remedial work in 2019 including rectifying a sewage issue caused by others

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and a blockage in the well outflow pipe across private land. Council to agree to write to Severn Trent on behalf of residents thanking them for their actions which have contributed to ongoing attraction of the historic well area for visitors and residents alike.

- d. Graveyard Maintenance Contract – Council to note that the Berkswell PCC have agreed the following terms of a contract with GR Dawsons. The PCC resolved to enter into a four year contract with G.R. Dawson Garden Services for the mowing of the churchyard at an annual cost of £2,580 plus V.A.T. This being a 50% contribution of the total annual cost, the remaining 50% contribution being made by Berkswell Parish Council. A joint letter of acceptance to be issued to Dawsons aligning the PCC with the Parish Council's conditions being a 4 year obligation subject to a 'get out' clause in the event that there is definitive evidence forthcoming that this financial commitment would be unlawful for the Parish Council. As this Council have already agreed to these terms (19 March 2020 Item 15) the Clerk will now liaise with the PCC and GR Dawson to formalise this agreement.
- e. Village telephone box
 - i. Council to consider the following quotation for repainting the telephone box and authorise the work.
 - Painting - the removal of paint back to bare metal, removing perspex etc and repainting to as close to the original i estimate to take 7 days at a day rate of £120.00 (i.e. £840). If it takes longer then this will increase per day or if is completed sooner this will decrease.
 - Materials - It is suggested that the parish council provide all necessary materials
 - Retaining wall- it is suggested that we use railway sleepers (new) and stain in dark oak. Estimate this to take 2 days at £120.00 per day and materials to be £180.00 making a total of £420.00
 - ii. Council to authorise the clerk to purchase the paint and materials (rivets etc) for the work and to note the VAT reclaim possible. Budget cost of £250
 - iii. Council to consider whether to replace the Perspex glazing in the box with either glass or Perspex. Council to consider various options on this giving a cost range of approx. £100 (door only in Glass or Perspex) to £520 plus VAT & £25 delivery for the whole box in glass with new glazing frames.
 - iv. Council to authorise the Berkswell Society to establish a “little library” in the box
 - v. Council to consider whether to create a retaining “wall” behind the box from “railway sleepers” to prevent the bank collapsing again onto the back of the box. Budget cost £420
- f. Balsall Common Christmas lights 2020 – Council to agree the following motion: *“This Council supports the idea of a "switch on" event providing by then it is allowed. We would like to be involved and will discuss arrangements in due course”.*
- g. Marsh Lane Nature Reserve – Council to agree to pay the annual subscription of £38 for 2020/21.
- h. Airport Consultative Committee – Council to consider a report on the virtual meeting held on 5 June 2020.

28. Parish Councillors Opinion

29. Next Meeting

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic it is not possible to confirm the date for the next meeting of the Council. An announcement will be made on our website in due course.

Signed: Mr Richard Wilson



Clerk

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Public and Press are welcome to attend

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Appendix 1

Berkswell Parish Council Accounts - 2019/20										
Income & Expenditure	2019/20									
	Actuals Apr to June (per cashbook)	Actuals July to Sept (per cashbook)	Actuals Oct to Dec (per cashbook)	Forecast Jan to Mar (per cashbook)	Actuals 2019/20	Original Budget	Adjustments (transfers from reserves as agreed by Council)	Revised Budget	Variance with Budget 2019/20 (Revised)	Variance %age of Budget
EXPENDITURE										
Employee Pay & Allowances	2,629.88	2,739.12	2,739.12	2,418.75	10,526.87	10,638	112	10,750	223	98%
Councillor Allowances & expenses	836.99	1,241.21	1,154.36	1,095.25	4,327.81	4,839		4,839	511	89%
Administration	2,173.77	910.31	283.07	877.90	4,245.05	4,271	550	4,821	576	88%
Communications	-	-	-	-	-	500		500	500	0%
Specialist Advice	40.00	2,383.12	-	-	2,423.12	1,000	2,400	3,400	977	71%
Local Plans	761.20	126.00	-	-	887.20	-	900	900	13	99%
Public Safety	-	-	-	1,130.00	1,130.00	4,000		4,000	2,870	28%
Grants & Donations	50.00	3,955.00	300.00	-	4,305.00	7,000		7,000	2,695	62%
Section 137	1,061.25	640.32	784.64	1,143.98	3,630.19	4,750	- 1,110	3,640	10	100%
Heritage & Maintenance	1,197.70	1,312.72	1,717.70	627.00	4,855.12	3,144	2,140	5,284	429	92%
Total Expenditure (excl VAT)	8,750.79	13,307.80	6,978.89	7,292.88	36,330.36	40,142	4,992	45,134	8,803	91%
Contingency					0	2,007	- 1,430	577	577	0%
Total Expenditure (including Contingency, ex VAT)	8,750.79	13,307.80	6,978.89	7,292.88	36,330.36	42,149	3,562	45,711	9,380	86%
VAT (assume VAT is neutral in each year)	409.09	254.54	233.03	373.97	1,270.63	863		863	- 408	
Total Expenditure (inc VAT)	9,159.88	13,562.34	7,211.92	7,666.85	37,600.99	43,011	3,562	46,573	8,972	1
	9,159.88	13,562.34	7,211.92	7,666.85		- 5,410				
INCOME										
Precept (including Support Grant)	12,997.50	12,997.50	-	-	25,995.00	25,879		25,995	-	100%
Support Grant	92.00	-	-	-	92.00	92		92	-	100%
Bank Interest	34.16	32.53	32.80	28.75	128.24	40		40		321%
Other Income	-	500.00	-	-	500.00	-		-	500	
CIL Parish Payments	1,454.28	-	-	-	1,454.28	-		-		
VAT Refund	-	-	2,337.48	-	2,337.48	2,500		2,500	163	93%
Total Income	14,577.94	13,530.03	2,370.28	28.75	30,507.00	28,511	-	28,627	337	107%
	14,577.94	13,530.03	2,370.28	28.75						
Balance of Income over Expenditure (Ex VAT)	5,418.06	- 32.31	- 4,841.64	- 7,638.10	- 7,093.99	- 14,500	- 3,562	- 17,946	- 9,310	0
Opening Reserves	59,337.08	64,755.14	64,722.83	59,881.19	59,337.08					
Closing Reserves	64,755.14	64,722.83	59,881.19	52,243.09	52,243.09					