

# BERKSWELL PARISH COUNCIL – ORDINARY MEETING 11 SEPTEMBER 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 Friday 11 September 2020 at 3:00pm 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

7 September 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 3:00pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82013724239?pwd=Wi9wQ3ArdVBGMjVGTDBseHJ6SVVvQT09>

When requested to do so enter the following:

Meeting ID: 820 1372 4239

Password: 487029

#### By Phone

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

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When requested to do so enter/provide the following:

Meeting ID: 820 1372 4239

Password: 487029

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82013724239>

### **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.

**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 18 June 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. **Borough Councillor's Report.**
9. **Planning Applications**
  - a. Planning violations - Council to note that enforcement action over the alleged wood processing and chipping operation at Hawkhurst Moor Farm is in abeyance pending a possible planning application.
  - b. Council to note the status of correspondence the Clerk has had with SMBC on behalf of the Council during lockdown (no change to that previously circulated).
  - c. Dumping of earth on land off Spencers Lane – Council to note that the Clerk has provided the Compliance Officer (David Wigfield) with photos of the alleged dumping. The Clerk has been advised by Mr Wigfield that the matter will be investigated but has stated *"I would be grateful if you would bear with us though – we are endeavouring to manage exceptionally high case-loads at the moment."*
  - d. a list of planning applications is detailed below for Council to discuss possible responses:

Ref	Location	Proposal	Response Date
2020/01569	Cornets End Lane Meriden Solihull CV7 7LG	Deletion of conditions 2 and 3 of planning permission PL/2017/01907/VAR, dated 28.09.2017, for continued operation of dry silo mortar plant, NAMELY : to allow the permanent retention of the dry silo mortar plant, and the processing of sand from other than Meriden Quarry.	15/09/20

**Motion**

In respect to application ref. 2020/01569 above, Council to consider the following motion: *"This Council objects to this planning application on the following basis. After the mineral extraction is finished the land is supposed to return to agriculture. Therefore, to have a structure retained is inappropriate industrial development in the greenbelt contrary to the NPPF and hence contrary to the Parish Council's policy on inappropriate development in the greenbelt. Accordingly, the Clerk is authorised to submit this objection."*

2020/01721	Land At Truggist Hill Farm Truggist Lane Berkswell Solihull	Prior notification for the erection of an agricultural building to replace existing buildings lost to HS2, and in order to provide a new building for farm machinery	15/09/20
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		storage, feed, hay and fertiliser storage and, for diversification, the growing of mushrooms.	
<b>Motion</b>			
In respect to application ref. 2020/01721, Council to consider the following motion: “ This Council objects to Planning Application PL/2020/01721/PNAG on the grounds that (a) the development is ineligible for Permitted Development rights, (b) replacement buildings have already been erected, (c) a suitable building has recently been converted to a dwelling, and (d) the development would contravene policies P17 and P18.			
2020/01960	Meriden Quarry Cornets End Lane Meriden Solihull	Replacement of existing fixed ready mix plant (RMX) and installation of a temporary mobile plant (on site for three years) to assist with the demands of supply to HS2.	24/09/20

**10. 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 and was subsequently endorsed under Item 12b of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 16 June 2020, 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 since the last meeting of the Council on 18 June 2020:

<b>Payment made</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Payment Method</b>	<b>Gross Amount £</b>	<b>VAT £</b>
J Hickin – works on the telephone box	t.b.c.	Contract	Bank Transfer	40.00	0
J Hickin – Ad hoc works per Clerk’s schedule dated 6 August 2020	02/09/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	140.00	0
J Hickin – Grounds maintenance contract August instalment	02/09/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
J Hickin - cost of materials used in preparation of Phone Box.	11/08/20	Ad Hoc 18/06/20 Item 27 e iv	Bank Transfer	167.10	20.43
J Hickin – Telephone box labour charge	14/08/20	Ad Hoc 18/06/20 Item 27 e iv	Bank Transfer	840.00	0
J Hickin – The Pound tidy up labour charge	14/08/20	Ad Hoc 18/06/20 Item 27 e iv	Bank Transfer	140.00	0
A Burrow – reimbursement for cost of materials re telephone box refurb	14/08/20	Ad Hoc 18/06/20 Item 27 e iv	Bank Transfer	639.69	106.89
J Hickin – hedge cutting around Berkswell village	06/08/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	260.00	0
J Hickin – Grounds maintenance contract July instalment	22/07/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
J Hickin – Telephone box retaining wall	22/07/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	420.00	0
R Wilson - Clerk's Salary July 2020	15/07/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	redacted	0
J Hickin – Grounds maintenance contract June instalment	15/07/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
R Wilson – reimbursement of admin costs (Google Play 2020/21 subscription)	15/07/20	Annual	Bank Transfer	37.13	6.18
C Joyner – Summer Planting	15/07/20	Plants	Bank Transfer	169.11	0
Open Spaces – annual subscription	17/07/20	Annual	Bank Transfer	45.00	0
GR Dawson – Churchyard maintenance April to June 2020	15/07/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	774.00	129.00
Berkswell PCC – room hire Jan to March 2020	17/07/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	100.00	0

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<b>Payment made</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Payment Method</b>	<b>Gross Amount £</b>	<b>VAT £</b>
A Burrow – Reimbursement of cost of plants for Berkswell Station planters	15/07/20	Planting Scheme	Bank Transfer	12.00	0
Hof E School – Grant	02/07/20	19/06/20 Item 12f	Bank Transfer	5,000.00	0
WJ Robinson – Internal audit fee	26/06/20	Statutory	Bank Transfer	157.00	0
Berkswell School - Grant	26/06/20	19/06/20 Item 12f	Bank Transfer	2,321.49	0
Berkswell Society – Grant planting scheme	26/06/20	19/06/20 Item 12f	Bank Transfer	500.00	0
<b>Total (excluding Clerk’s salary)</b>				<b>12,431.91</b>	<b>262.50</b>

- b. 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.

<b>Invoices for Payment</b>	<b>Approval</b>	<b>Payment Method</b>	<b>Gross Amount £</b>	<b>VAT £</b>
Clerk’s salary – September 2020	Contract	EBP	Redacted	0
Cllrs Allowances – July to September 2020	Annual	EBP	884.75	0
HMRC – PAYE – July to September 2020	Statutory	EBP	1,010.59	0
D Edwards – Expenses claim re Zoom subscription	Admin	EBP	43.17	0
<b>Total (excluding Clerk’s salary)</b>			<b>1,938.51</b>	<b>0</b>

- c. Payments received – Council received the following sums:
- a. £1,187.84 on 27 July 2020 from HMRC as reimbursement of VAT paid in 2019/20.
  - b. £21,799.00 on 1 September 2020 from SMBC as 2<sup>nd</sup> half payment of 2020/21 precept
- d. Bank Account balance – Council to note that the council’s bank balance as at 4 September 2020 was £57,639.
- e. Councillor Allowances – Council to note that SMBC have just released the 2020/21 Councillor Allowance rates which take effect from 1 April 2020. The new rates are as follows: Parish Basic Allowance - £731.25 p.a. and Chairman’s Allowance - £1,462.50.
- f. Grant applications – the following grant applications have been received:
- i. Berkswell School – A contribution has been requested in light of extra costs and a serious loss of income to the school due to Covid-19. The grant would be used to enable the Community Mentor Service to continue. This was previously funded by another source but this funding was withdrawn in April 2020.
  - ii. Balsall & Berkswell Hornets Football Club – The sum of £2,694 has been requested as a contribution to the cost of replacing a set of full-size goals and a set of junior goals
  - iii. Council to consider the following motion: *“This Council agrees that, if necessary to meet the cost of the grants awarded in respect of the above, the Clerk is authorised to transfer the necessary funds from the general reserve into the Grants budget.*

**11. Councillor Allowances**

- a. Council to note that all five councillors have declared that they wish to receive appropriate allowances for the period 1 July to 30 September 2020 based on the following annual allowances: Parish Basic Allowance (PBA) £731.25 p.a.; and Chairman’s Allowance £1,462.50 p.a.

**12. 2020/21 Management Accounts**

- a. Council to note the management accounts for Quarter 1 of 2020/21 (available on the Council’s website).
- b. The Councillor Audit which usually takes place on a quarterly basis has not been carried out this year due to the Coronavirus restrictions. It is proposed that the Chairman and the Clerk will consider an interim form of Councillor Audit which could be conducted without any physical contact.

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- c. These management accounts show the following adjustments to the originally approved 2020/21 budget:

Budget Heading	Adjust-ment	Revised Budget	Explanation
Employee Pay	+ £1,571	£12,580	to reflect Clerk's pay award agreed on 19/03/20
Cllr Allowances	- £1,598	£3,839	Reduction in number of councillors from 7 to 5 in 2020/21 & allowances not taken by RD & AB in Q1
Grants & Donations	+ 5,827	£10,827	added SMBC COVID-19 grant & unspent 2019/20 grant budget b/fwd
Heritage & Maintenance	+ £2,000	£8,974	transfer from reserves re telephone box refurbishment

### 13. Guide to Risk Management

- a. Council to note that our insurers, Zurich Insurance, have issued a 'Guide to Risk Management' designed to help councils identify and manage potential risks.
- b. Council to consider the following motion: "This Council agrees a group of 2 or 3 councillors plus the Clerk, should review the Zurich Risk Management guide to identify areas where the Council's processes could be improved and thereby make recommendations for change.

### 14. Policies and Procedures

- a. Reserves Policy – Council to agree that the Clerk should revise the Reserves Policy to reflect the financial position at the end of the financial year 2019/20
- b. Equality and Diversity Policy
  - i. Council to consider whether to adopt a policy which Parish Councils have been encouraged to do so by WALC.
  - ii. Council to consider the following motion: "*This Council considers that the policy on Equality and Diversity circulated by WALC to be well intentioned but with little practical use to a small council such Berkswell which employs a Clerk working 12 hours per week. However, the Council considers that the Council needs to treat all people with respect, without discrimination and should take positive steps, if necessary, to assist those who might be disadvantaged in their dealings with the Council.*"
    - *The Council approves in principle the approach within a draft equality policy produced by Councillor Burrow and refers it to a working group comprising Councillor Howles, Councillor Edwards, Councillor Burrow and the Clerk to finalise for the next meeting with recommendations for alterations to any other policies to reflect the new Equality policy.*
    - *Council asks the Clerk to ensure that its web site is consistent with the requirements of Accessibility Regulation 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps> and authorises the Clerk to spend such reasonable monies as required to ensure compliance"*

### 15. Risk Management

- a. Council to discuss any new finance and risk events
- b. Council to note that work has been carried out to address the risks identified by Cllrs Burrow and Howles during their physical asset inspection earlier this year.

### 16. 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)

### 17. Correspondence – nothing to report

### 18. Ongoing References

- a. Review of inventory of land and assets
  - i. Kelsey Lane Bus Shelter – the Clerk is still awaiting a response from HMLR.
- b. Informal visit by Saqib Bhatti - Council to note the report on the informal visit by our local MP to Berkswell Parish to discuss the Solihull Local Plan

**19. Training and Meetings**

- a. Council to note attendance of Cllr Lloyd at training on Parish Online digital mapping system on 19 June 2020 and to consider whether to undertake free 90-day trial

**20. Heritage and Community**

- a. Solihull Plan – Council to note that the SMBC cabinet met on 10th September to endorse the submission draft of the Solihull plan. Council to consider setting up a working party to develop Berkswell Parish Council's response and where appropriate coordinate to with Balsall PC on areas of common interest e.g. infrastructure. It is proposed that the working party will comprise those Berkswell Councillors and residents who were members of the Berkswell NDP Committee. Council to note that, if appropriate, an EM will be arranged to agree the Council's response to the consultation.
- b. WALC SAC – Council to note discussions at the WALC SAC virtual meeting held on 9 July 2020. A report is to be circulated in advance of the meeting.
- c. Community Champion – Council to note that Cllr Burrow has volunteered to act as Community Champion for Berkswell Parish.
- d. Balsall Common Village Centre - Council to note that the SLEP have awarded a grant of £25,000 to enable Berkswell and Balsall PCs to hire consultants to develop a vision and plan for Balsall Common centre. The grant conditions require match funding from the two PCs. Council to note that at joint PC working group has already been established. Council to approve
  - the establishment of a budget of £8,400 to meet Berkswell PCs share of the matching funds from reserves.
  - A transfer from the general reserve to fund the new budget required to cover this cost
  - the appointment of Vince Ritters to the working group
- e. Village telephone box
  - i. Informal opening – Council to note that an informal opening of the telephone box library took place on 26 August.
  - ii. Cost of refurbishment – Council to note that the full net cost of the refurbishment was £1,999.90 against the agreed budget of £2,000.
  - iii. Council to approve the expenditure of up to £150 for turf with wild flowers from the maintenance budget for the earth area next to the Berkswell telephone box library. Work to be undertaken by volunteers.
- f. Airport Consultative Committee – Council to consider a report from Cllr Lloyd on the virtual meeting held on 5 June 2020. A report is to be circulated in advance of the meeting.
- g. Process to deal with travellers – given there has been significant traveller activity in Solihull reported throughout the summer, Council to consider if a formal process is required in the event that Berkswell needs to take action. It is proposed that a small working party is set up to consider a suitable approach and to report back to the next meeting of the Council.
- h. The Berkswell Project – Council to note that SMBC have signed the contract as Highways authority with the WMCA for the spending of a WMCA grant on the Berkswell (village traffic calming) project and SMBC have appointed a Project Engineer to move the project forward to implementation.
  - Council to note the project's progress report
  - Council to approve a Parish Council project team to work with SMBC to deliver the project as specified in the Berkswell NDP as follows. Councillors Burrow and Edwards, Jane Edwards (for Berkswell Charities and NDP Committee member) and Graham Lock (for the Berkswell Society)
- i. Planting programme – Council to approve that the clerk spends the balance of the budget of the Balsall Common planting programme for the autumn planting of £418.89 (i.e. £600 budget less £181.11 already spent) plus £100 from the maintenance budget for compost/wood chippings for the station roundabout if that cannot be accommodated within the planting programme budget.

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- j. Riddings Hill Fruit Trees - Council to approve the expenditure of £100 for replacement fruit trees for Riddings Hill.
- k. War Memorial
- i. Council to note the report prepared by Councillor Burrow on the war memorial roof which recommends the rapid repair/replacement of the roof waterproofing as agreed at the June 2020 meeting of the PC. It is also recommended that competitive tenders to be sought from contractors and the most suitable solution chosen taking account of cost, guarantees, committed completion dates and the appropriateness of the solution proposed. Work to include removing all plant growth and action to ensure that the sycamore and other growth does not regrow. Councillors Burrow, Drake and Howell to advise the Clerk if necessary.
  - ii. Council to consider the following motions:
    - *“This Council agrees to adopt the recommendations contained in Councillor Burrow’s report to repair the roof and remove the vegetation”*
    - *“This Council instructs the clerk to investigate the actual ownership of the War Memorial before it accepts any responsibility/liability for its long term maintenance”.*
    - *Council to seek professional specialist advice on curing the apparent water penetration of the structure, correcting structural defects in the block work, restoring and consolidating the surface damage caused by organic growth and efflorescence, and correcting any other deterioration that becomes apparent, in accordance with guidance from the War Memorials Trust.*
- l. Christmas trees – Council to authorise the Clerk to purchase 8 Christmas trees for Balsall Common and one for Berkswell village plus tinsel for the Station Roundabout and Berkswell Station trees given the vandalism suffered by the Christmas bubbles in 2019 plus batteries for the Christmas lights. Budget of £450.
- m. Rights of Way
- i. Council to resume the action agreed at the January 2020 meeting of the Council about the chronic flooding of M196 near Carstins, now the pandemic restrictions are being eased, and taking account of the response from the Highway Authority to the Council's representations.
  - ii. Council to write to HS2 Ltd and the Highway Authority to request the early restoration of public access on the Greenway, M198, and M214 as discussed at the HS2 Implementation Advisory Group on 27 July, and as detailed in complaints to HS2 Ltd and emails to the Council from Mr S Cross, the Warden Coordinator of the Heart of England Way Association.
- n. Footway Parking - Council to approve a submission to the HM Government’s consultation on footway parking on the basis that there should be a national/universal ban on parking on pavements in England, except for the categories defined in the proposals with local authorities permitted to allow pavement parking in specific circumstances to meet local needs. i.e. support for option 3.

**21. Late Cllr Hitchcock** - Council to note that Solihull MBC has ordered a disease-resistant English Elm as a memorial.

**22. Parish Councillors Opinion**

**23. Next Meetings**

The next meeting of the Council will be held on 19 November 2020 commencing at 7:00pm and will be a Zoom meeting.

Potential future dates of meetings for the remainder of 2020/21 will be circulated to members and will be available on the Council’s website

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Signed: Mr Richard Wilson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Clerk

**Public and Press are welcome to attend**