

Berkswell Parish Council – Ordinary Meeting 19 November 2020

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell held virtually via Zoom on 19 November 2020 at 7:00 pm.

	Action by
<p>1. Attendance: Cllrs Drake, Edwards, Lloyd, Howles, Burrow; the Clerk; Cllr Diccico (SMBC); and 4 members of the public.</p> <p>2. Apologies for absence: Cllr Howell (SMBC)</p> <p>3. Acceptance of apologies for absence</p> <p>4. Declarations of Interest</p> <p>a. Council received the following declarations of interest from Councillors on items on the agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Drake – Item 10a refers to a reimbursement for the cost of a wreath, and Item 10c refers to a contribution to the Council in respect of another wreath in 2019/20 • Cllr Edwards – Item 10 b refers to a reimbursement of Zoom costs • Cllr Lloyd – Reminded Council that he is the local representative of OSS but will be acting as a parish councillor throughout the meeting • Cllr Burrow restated that he owns land as part of land on Barratts Farm and that he is the Secretary of Berkswell Society <p>b. There were no written requests to disclose pecuniary interests</p> <p>c. There were no requests for dispensations</p> <p>d. Councillors were 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</p> <p>5. To approve Minutes of the following meeting: Council approved the following minutes: Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 11 September 2020 Extraordinary Meeting 12 November 2020. Cllr Lloyd proposed to take out the three specific points in Minute 7b iv. This proposal was not supported.</p> <p>6. Matters arising from the previous meeting requiring attention There were no matters arising.</p> <p>7. Open Forum Parishioners of Berkswell are invited to address the Council on any relevant matter for a maximum of three minutes</p> <p>8. Borough Councillor's Report. Cllr Diccico stated he had nothing new to report</p> <p>9. Planning Applications</p> <p>a. Planning violations – council noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawkhurst Moor - alleged unauthorised change of use of waste processing facility: Council noted correspondence between Cllr Lloyd, local residents and Solihull Planning Enforcement of 15 October, in which SMBC says that no new planning application is required, notwithstanding that the current use involves chipping "brown" waste while the extant permission is for composting "green" 	

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waste, and that Cllr Lloyd has recommended a careful review of the compliance of the current operation with the approved plans, the original assurances, and the planning conditions, in particular, restriction of noisy operations to 0900 to 1700 Mon - Fri.

- b. Council noted the status of correspondence the Clerk has had with SMBC on behalf of the Council during lockdown (as circulated). Council agreed to share the log of correspondence still awaiting a reply with Dave Cuthbert (SAC Chair) and Ward Councillors.
- c. Council were reminded that planning applications relating to Berkswell are routinely forwarded on to Parish Council Members by the Clerk for their consideration and their individual response if required. Any councillor may request an application should be included on an Ordinary Meeting agenda or apply to the Chairman for an Extraordinary Meeting to consider an application requiring discussion and possible Parish Council comment. There had been no requests to consider an application at this meeting.

Clerk

10. Financial Matters

- a. The following is a list of payments made using NatWest Bankline since the last meeting of the Council on 11 September 2020:

Payment made	Date	Approval	Payment Method	Gross Amount £	VAT £
Royal Mail Finance – annual renewal PO Box Service	09/09/20	Annual Admin	Direct Debit	352.50	58.75
Berkswell School – COVID 19 Grant	24/09/20	Grant	Bank Transfer	7,000.00	0
Balsall & Berkswell Hornets – grant for new goal posts	24/09/20	Grant	Bank Transfer	2,694.00	0
PKF Littlejohn LLP – 2019/20 External Audit	30/09/20	Statutory	Bank Transfer	240.00	40.00
ICS Print & Reprographics – printing of Local Plan	30/09/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	218.25	0
RD Wilson – reimbursement for annual subscription cost of Norton Anti-Virus for Council laptop	02/10/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	74.99	12.50
J Hickin – Invoice No 397 – Grass cutting contract September 2020	02/10/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
ICO Licence fee 2020/21	08/10/20	Statutory	Direct Debit	35.00	0
RD Wilson - Clerk's expenses – Warwickshire Records Office fee	19/10/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	8.00	0
J Hickin – reimbursement for turf (Telephone box)	19/10/20	Maintenance	Bank Transfer	42.00	6.99
RD Wilson – Clerk's October salary	22/10/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	redacted	0
DM Payroll Service Ltd – 1 st half 2020/21 fees	02/11/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	75.00	0
J Hickin – Final Grounds maintenance instalment	02/11/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	223.13	0
GR Dawson – Burial ground maintenance Jul to Sept 2020	10/11/20	Contract	Bank Transfer	774.00	129.00
R Drake – reimbursement for Remembrance Day Wreath	10/11/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	25.00	0
RD Wilson – tinsel for 2020 Xmas trees	10/11/20	Admin	Bank Transfer	27.42	4.65
Total (excluding Clerk's salary)				12,012.42	251.89

- b. The following invoice payment was presented for approval having been examined, verified and certified by the RFO to confirm that the work, goods or services to which the invoice relates, has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the Council.

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Invoices for Payment	Approval	Payment Method	Gross Amount £	VAT £
D Edwards – Expenses claim re Zoom subscription	Admin	EBP	43.17	0.00
Total			43.17	0.00

Clerk

c. Payments received – Council noted a sum of £15 had been received on 29 October 2020 from Cllr Drake as a contribution to a Remembrance Day wreath in 2019/20.

d. Bank Account balance – Council noted that the council’s bank balance as at 13 November 2020 was £63,929.

e. New Bank Account

- Council noted that NatWest Bank, as part of a government led initiative, have offered the Parish Council a cash incentive of £1,250 to move its account to another bank as part of their Business Banking Switch initiative. The Clerk had received offers from the Co-Operative and Metro Banks but only the Co-Operative has been proactive in engaging in a possible switch, making the Co-Operative Bank the favoured choice. The service offer from the Co-Operative Bank appears on paper to be superior to the current service provided by NatWest, in particular it will allow for two councillors to authorise on-line payments.
- Council considered whether to switch to the Co-Operative Bank, noting that we need to apply to our chosen participating bank by **28th February 2021** at the latest.
- Council agreed to authorise the Clerk, working in conjunction with the Chairman, to progress the account transfer.

RD/Clerk

f. New Finance System

- Council noted that, to date, no suitable system for a parish council of our size has been identified. The current, Excel based approach, is very much fit for purpose. However, the Clerk is very experienced in using this tool and the Council faces a risk in the event that the Clerk becomes suddenly indisposed. In such an event, the Chairman is of the view that Council’s accounts are simple enough that they could be re-created from bank statements and support documentation if necessary. Council accepted this position but requested the Clerk to write some guidance note on how to maintain the financial records. These notes should be incorporated in the Accounts Spreadsheet.
- Council agreed that no further action to identify a replacement finance system should be taken at this time.

Clerk

11. 2021/22 Budget – Council was reminded that a meeting has been scheduled for 14 January 2021 to set the Council’s 2021/22 Budget and Precept. In order to facilitate the budget process Councillors were asked to provide the Clerk with any budget items/assumptions they wish to have considered when agreeing the budget. These should be provided to the Clerk by 1 December 2020 to enable the Clerk to prepare an Options paper for consideration on 14 January 2021. Council asked the Clerk to circulate the 2019/20 budget assumptions paper as a guide for 2020/21.

Clerk

<p>12. Guide to Risk Management</p>	<p>a. Council noted that the Clerk has reviewed our insurers’, Zurich Insurance, ‘Guide to Risk Management’(previously circulated) designed to help councils identify and manage potential risks. Council agreed the Clerk’s recommendation that this document should be used for reference when planning risk assessments and asset inspections going forward.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>13. Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>a. Reserves’ Policy – Council noted that the Clerk has revised the Reserves Policy to reflect the Council’s financial position at the end of the financial year 2019/20 (a copy is available on the Council’s website)</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
	<p>b. Equality and Diversity Policy – Council considered the draft Equality Policy (previously circulated) and agree the following motion: “<i>This Council agrees to adopt the draft Equality Policy with immediate effect</i>”.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
	<p>c. Grant Awarding Policy – This item was deferred to the January 2021 meeting.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>14. Website Accessibility – Council noted the report on the “Accessibility of the Berkswell PC web site to those using ‘Google Read Aloud’” (circulated previously). Council agreed in principle to move towards implementing the proposed actions contained in the report.</p>		<p>Clerk</p>
<p>15. Risk Management</p>	<p>a. Council noted there were no new finance and risk events</p>	
<p>16. Actions Arising from Previous Meetings</p>	<p>a. Council noted the status of agreed actions from previous meetings as circulated (a copy is available on the Council website).</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>17. Correspondence</p>	<p>a. Complaint from a resident regarding the Berkswell Project (see also item 18f)</p> <p>i. Council noted the complaint regarding aspects of the Berkswell Traffic Improvement Project</p> <p>ii. Council noted that all Berkswell residents were invited to attend consultations during the proposed design phase which was an opportunity for individuals to express their opinions. Council agreed to ask the Clerk to advise the resident that implementation of the scheme will be a matter for Solihull MBC who are overseeing the project. The final design will be subject to a statutory consultation.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>18. Ongoing References</p>	<p>a. Review of inventory of land and assets</p> <p>i. Kelsey Lane Bus Shelter – Council noted that the Clerk is still awaiting a response from HM Land Registry.</p> <p>b. Balsall Common Village Centre Master Plan</p> <p>i. Council noted that 20 consultancies had submitted a response to the joint Invitation to Tender issued by the Balsall PC clerk on behalf of both Parish Councils. Evaluation of tenders have been undertaken and 3 submissions have been selected for short-list interviews which are scheduled to take place on 26 & 27 November.</p> <p>ii. Council agreed the joint agreement with Balsall PC regarding the responsibilities and commitments for the Balsall Common Centre project.</p> <p>iii. Council agreed to delegate to the Clerk the authority to authorise the placement of an order with a consultant to prepare a Village Centre Master</p>	

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<p>Plan, through Balsall Parish Council, that will not exceed the approved project budget.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>iv. Council noted that a project is being developed with Balsall Parish to provide 6 tree planters in the centre, two of which will be in Berkswell Parish. SMBC Highways have approved the locations via Councillor Burrow and Councillors Keely (from Balsall) and Lloyd (from Berkswell) are nominated to recommend suitable trees. Council to approve costs in due course.</p>	<p>RL</p>
<p>c. Balsall Common Safety and Security - Council noted the written summary outcome of the Balsall Common safety and security questionnaire conducted by the joint working group with Balsall PC. Council agreed to the request to support an application to SMBC for a 20 mph speed limit in Balsall Common centre from Meeting House Lane to the roundabout on the A452.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>d. Rights of Way</p> <p>i. Section 56 Notice - Council noted that the clerk had issued a Section 56 Notice to SMBC regarding the chronic flooding of footpath M196 near Carstins, as originally agreed at the January 2020 meeting of the Council. SMBC have formally acknowledged receipt (Incident: 201021-000344) but there has been no detailed response to date.</p> <p>ii. Council note the preliminary consultation on a possible diversion of M222 at Hill House Farm and the response of the Open Spaces Society on the matter (copy available on the Council website), and considered making a response pointing out that the Council was unaware of any reports of health and safety issues, that the diversion procedure under the Highways Act could not consider the effect of the right of way on land other than that over which the path passes, and that the exposure of path users to potential hazards in the farmyard had been increased by the longstanding unlawful diversion of the path. Cllr Burrow proposed that the Council should object to the diversion which was agreed. Cllr Lloyd was asked to draft the objection for the Clerk to send to SMBC.</p>	<p>RL/Clerk</p>
<p>e. Tree Works</p> <p>i. Council noted that the Clerk has placed an order with Midland Forestry to carry out tree works under the categories; ‘Hazard Works within 1 year’; and ‘Formative/Nuisance Works within 1 year’; as recommended in the Arboricultural Report dated 3 February 2020. The total cost of the work is quoted at £1,905.60 (inc VAT). The 2020/21 budget for this is £3,000. Midland Forestry have advised that they now have the necessary planning consent and will carry out the works on 3rd & 4th of December. The contractors have also advised that the works required do not impact the school or car park. They will be dead wooding one tree near to the school site but this will be done when the children are not out playing. Council accepted this proposal.</p> <p>ii. Council asked the Clerk to request a quote from Midland Forestry to carry out recommended year 2 works.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>f. The Berkswell Project – Cllr Burrow reported that progress has slowed on the project. However, the technical survey of the roads has been completed and the location of the key elements agreed by the working group. Cllr Burrow also stated that this is now a highways project and that the Parish Council’s role is going forward is to ensure the project follows the agreed specification.</p>	<p></p>

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<p>g. Planting programme – Council noted that clearance has been given by West Midlands Travel for two Society volunteers to replant the station planters during lockdown. HS2 Contractors have agreed to supply free of charge 3 cu metres of chippings for the station roundabout which has been weeded by volunteers in preparation. An informal "budget" of £225 has been advised to the volunteers and plants will be sourced as part of the volunteers general sourcing for public planting on Station Road. This includes an upgrade to the Masala Club gum tree bed.</p>	
<p>h. Riddings Hill Fruit Trees – Nothing new to report</p>	
<p>i. War Memorial</p>	
<p>i. Council considered the Clerk’s report entitled “Investigation into the ownership of the Berkswell Village War Memorial” (circulated previously).</p>	
<p>ii. Council noted the updated recommendations in the Clerk’s report to reflect latest developments.</p>	
<p>iii. Council authorised the Clerk to commission a condition survey of the memorial by a War Memorial Trust recommended third party to establish options, detailing the necessary scope of work and estimated costs, together with advice on possible grants.</p>	
<p>iv. Council considered the following motion: “<i>Council to approve a budget of £2k for the survey and authorised the Clerk to apply for any grant available toward the cost of such a survey. Council to note that the Clerk has received a quotation from a suitably qualified consultancy to carry out a condition survey of the memorial for a fee of £1,770. This would include a visit to site, production of the report, laboratory analysis for matching the mortar, some historical research into the history of the structure and making pre-application grant enquiries on our behalf</i>”. Council agreed the following amendment to the motion to include: removal of the words “ <i>and making pre-application grant enquiries on our behalf</i>” and add in the words “<i>Council wish to make it clear that there is no expectation that the Parish Council will fund any restoration work or be involved in commissioning the work</i>”. Cllr Lloyd proposed the amended motion which was seconded by Cllr Edwards. The motion was carried unanimously. Council asked the Clerk to liaise with Alastair Dymond (Berkswell PCC), who is looking at involving the church architect in surveying the memorial, to avoid duplication.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>v. The Clerk was asked to liaise with Alastair Dymond to develop a specific recommendation for temporary repairs, and to write to the SMBC Conservation Officer requesting approval to proceed with such repairs.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>j. Christmas trees – Council noted that, further to discussion at the September meeting of the Council, the requirement is now 9 Christmas trees for Balsall Common and one for Berkswell village. The estimated cost of the 2020 Christmas Tree initiative is £567.36 (ex VAT) to include tree purchase, tinsel, and cost of placing and disposal of the trees. There may be some further minor costs which will be accommodated within the approved £450 plus £150 contingency figure of £600 (analysis of costs circulated previously). Council agreed with a further £100 added for contingency.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>k. Publishing routes of local walks - Council approved the suggestion of working with the Berkswell Society on publishing routes of local walks to facilitate the mental health of residents during lockdown. Council noted that walk details will</p>	

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<p>be hosted on the Berkswell Society website for technical and operational reasons and publicised using local newsletters and social media. Council agreed the use of the PASMA number to obtain appropriate maps to support descriptions of the walks.</p>	
<p>19. Training and Meetings – Cllr Howles had attended a WALC course on ‘Responding to Planning Applications’ and had found it useful, Cllr Lloyd reported that he is participating in tree training next week.</p>	
<p>20. Heritage and Community</p>	
<p>a. Airport Consultative Committee – Council noted reports from Cllr Lloyd on the virtual meeting held on 17 September 2020 and the Noise Subgroup on 21 October. The report had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p>	
<p>b. Councillor Don Hitchcock (Dec’d)</p>	
<p>i. Council noted that Solihull MBC hope to be in a position in mid-December to plant a memorial English Elm in the land next to Dengate Drive, but that attendance at the planting will depend on the Covid-19 regulations in force at the time. Cllr Lloyd was asked to inform Cllrs when the planting had taken place so they can pay their respects.</p>	<p>RL</p>
<p>ii. Council thanked Revd Dr Mark Bratton for remembering our late colleague as part of the Remembrance Sunday service. Cllr Edwards had attended the service which was ‘lovely’.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>iii. Cllr Howles reported she had spoken to Mary Hitchcock, who had asked about possible new footpaths in Lavender Hall Park. Cllr Drake confirmed that he had spoken to SMBC regarding improving waste land by Sainsbury’s during which the possibility of moving the footpaths was mentioned. There are no firm proposals.</p>	
<p>c. HS2</p>	
<p>i. Council noted that the Solihull Implementation Advisory Group met on 29 October 2020 without any invitations being sent out. Council were going to write to Cllr Diccio asking that there should be better publicity in future. However, Cllr Diccio commented in the meeting that he didn’t realise the SIAG meeting details had not been circulated and promised to ensure this won’t happen again and to give adequate notice in future. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 December.</p>	
<p>ii. The Clerk was asked to write to the LM project manager (Steve Paskins) to thank them for opening up the footpath from Old Waste Lane to Station Road. Cllr Burrow agreed to draft the letter. Cllr Diccio congratulated the Council for resolving this issue.</p>	<p>AB/Clerk</p>
<p>21. Next Meetings</p>	
<p>The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be held on 14 January 2021 commencing at 7:00pm and will be a Zoom meeting to set the 2021/22 Budget.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>The Chairman reported that he would be calling an EM 3 December 2020 to consider the Local Plan.</p>	<p>RD</p>