Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council of Berkswell held in the Hornets Clubhouse, Lavender Hall Lane, Berkswell on 14 May 2026 at 7:30 pm.

	ACTION
1. Record of Members Present – Cllrs Shadbolt, Edwards, Drake, Lloyd & Sawyer (from 20:20pm); Ward Cllr Delaney and 3 residents.	
2. To receive apologies – Cllrs Howles & Lycett; and the Parish Clerk (due to illness) and Ward Cllr Dicicco. It was agreed that Cllr Drake would minute the meeting in the absence of the Clerk.	
3. Election of Chairman – Nominations were invited for the position of Chairman. Cllr Edwards nominated Cllr Shadbolt. This was seconded by Cllr Drake and unanimously accepted.	
4. To receive the Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office – having been duly elected, Cllr Shadbolt completed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance.	
5. Election of Vice-Chairman - Nominations were invited for the position of Vice-Chairman. Cllr Shadbolt nominated Cllr Sawyer (who had indicated that he was willing to be nominated in his absence). This was seconded by Cllr Drake and unanimously accepted.	
6. To receive the Vice-Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office - Cllr Sawyer completed and signed the Declaration of Acceptance when he joined the meeting at 20:20pm.	
7. Declarations of Interest a. The following declarations of interest were received from Councillors on items on the agenda: i. Cllr Shadbolt – As treasurer of the Jubilee Centre agreed not to vote on item 28.d.3. ii. Cllr Drake – As a member of U3A, who regularly use St Peter's Hall, agreed not to vote on item 28.d.2. b. There were no written requests for disclosing pecuniary interests c. There were no requests for dispensations	
8. To approve Minutes of the following meeting: - The following minutes were approved and duly signed by the Chairman: Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 5 March 2026 Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 20 April 2026	
9. Matters arising from the previous meeting requiring attention – there were no matters arising on items not covered by the agenda.	
10. To appoint Committee Members and review Remit of Delegation of Functions to Committees and/or appoint Working Party - Council reviewed the current "Committee Members" schedule and confirmed that Cllr Sawyer will replace Cllr Edwards on the Staffing Committee.	
11. To appoint Representatives to sit on Outside Bodies Council reviewed the current "Representation with External Bodies" schedule and confirmed that Cllr Lycett will be a representative of the Council	**AL**
12. To agree Account Signatories and sign appropriate Bank Mandate – Council confirmed that all Councillors will be registered as cheque signatories on the Co-Operative bank mandate enabling them to authorise payments via on-line banking, as well as via manual cheques (if required). However, tokens for online payments will only be requested for the Chair, Vice Chair, Cllr Drake and the Clerk, as the number of payments are relatively small and if not used regularly online access is suspended	

resulting in unnecessary admin. The number of online tokens requested will be reviewed at least annually to reflect experience in operation. **Clerk**

13. **To agree to review Council's Policies and Procedures -** Council noted the following status of our policies and procedures and approved the proposed actions.:

Policy/Procedure	Last Reviewed/Approved	Review Required?	Comment
Standing Orders	17 July 2025	No	
Financial Regulations	15 May 2025	No	
IT Policy	15 May 2025	No	
Press & Media	17 July 2025	No	
Reserves Policy	15 May 2025	Yes	Update in line with 2025/26 AGAR
Grant Awarding Policy	15 May 2025	No	
Privacy Policy	15 May 2025	No	
Freedom of Information	15 May 2025	No	
Complaints Procedure	15 May 2025	No	
Risk Management	15 May 2025	No	
Asset Register	15 May 2025	No	
Green Belt	17 July 2025	No	
Employment Policy	17 July 2025	No	
Equality Policy	15 May 2025	No	
Tree Safety	15 May 2025	No	
Meetings with 3rd Parties	15 May 2025	No	

14. **Councillors' Allowances**
    a. Council noted that, as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003, the recommended maximum Parish Basic Allowances (PBA) for 2026/27 as approved by SMBC, is as follows: Parish Basic Allowance £1,290 p.a and Chairman's Allowance £2,580 p.a.
    b. Council noted that under Minute 17 of the Annual Meeting held on 16 May 2019, Council agreed the following motion: "Council to adopt the SMBC schedule of recommended Parish Basic Allowances and Chairman's Allowance which is published annually. This will take effect from 1 April 2020 based on the 2020/21 schedule and updated annually thereafter". Consequently, the Clerk will automatically apply the new allowances with effect from 1 April 2026. **Clerk**
15. **To receive a report on the capital assets and liabilities vested in the Council -** Council noted the current Council's Asset Register which has been revised since the previous year but the Assets Valuation has remained unchanged (available on the council website).
16. **Council Insurance**
    a. Council noted that the Council's insurance with Zurich Insurance expires on 31 May 2026. We are in a Long-Term Agreement with Zurich insurance, who have quoted a renewal premium of £504.39 including tax. This represents an insignificant reduction on our 2025/26 premium. In previous years the clerk has obtained quotes from other companies (Came & Co and BHIB) both of which came in significantly higher than Zurich.
    b. Council agreed to authorise the Clerk to accept the quote from Zurich Insurance of £504.39 **Clerk**
17. **Annual Payments**
    a. Council approved the following schedule of annual payments for 2026/27:

Payee	Purpose	2026/27 Budget/Actual Amount £ (ex VAT)
Zurich Insurance	Annual Insurance Premium	504
GR Dawson	Graveyard maintenance contract	3,300
Fairways Contracting Limited	Grass cutting/maintenance of public areas contract	3,335
WALC	Annual subscription	947
DM Payroll Services	Payroll services contract	150
Open Spaces Society	Annual subscription	45
Norton	Anti-virus software	120
DPO Fee	Annual Fee	35
Audit Fees	Internal & External audit fees	575
Adobe fee	Facility to convert PDF files to MS Word files	30
PO Box subscription	PO Box for all Council mail	375
R Wilson	Clerk's salary	19,000
Elected Councillors	Councillors Allowances	9,500
Balsall Parish Council	Contribution to BC Christmas lights	2,000
Various	Room hire	450
WALC	Training	200
Starboard Systems Ltd	Scribe Accounting fees	370
Microsoft	365 software	75
Google Cloud	Website Hosting	168
Admin	Stationery, printer supplies etc	200
HMRC	Clerk and Councillor's Tax and NI	As required
NEST	Employers Pension Contribution	As required

b. Council agreed that the Clerk has delegated power to negotiate these services/subscriptions but payments are to be made in accordance with Financial Regulations.

18. Internal Audit Report 2025/26

a. Council noted that the annual internal audit was carried out by Bill Robinson on 15 April 2026.

b. A copy of the Internal Audit Report for the year 2025/26 had been circulated and is available on the Council's website. Council commended the Clerk on the report.

19. Annual Governance and Accountability Return – A copy of the draft Annual Return for 2025/26 had been circulated to councillors for their consideration prior to approval (see Items 20 to 21 below). Council noted that the Annual Return must be submitted to the external Auditors no later than 30 June 2026.

20. Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 – Council **agreed** in the affirmative (or by stating N/A) the 9 listed statements, in Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and consequently agreed the following motion; "we confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the accounting statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, the annual governance statement". Council also **agreed** that the Annual Governance Statement should be signed by the Chairman and clerk in attendance at the meeting (i.e. Cllr Drake).. This statement will be available on the Council's website once it has been approved and must be published before 1 July 2026. **Clerk**

21. Accounting Statements 2025/26 – Council noted that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return must be prepared following the guidance in "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices"

and that they present fairly the financial position of this Authority. The Responsible Financial Officer must sign the Statement before it is presented to the Authority for approval. Council confirmed that this had been done and then the Council carried out its approval, in the following order:

a. Consider the statement of accounts by the members meeting as a whole;
b. Approve the statement of accounts by resolution. Consequently, Council approved the following motion – "The accounting statements for 2025/26 are approved by this Council"; and
c. Ensure the statement of accounts is signed and dated by the person presiding at the meeting at which that approval is given.
d. This statement will be available on the Council's website once it has been approved and must be published before 1 July 2026.

Clerk

22. **Analysis of S.137 expenditure –** Council noted that the maximum permitted expenditure in 2025/26 under the Local Government Act 1972 S.137 was £23,200 and that the actual S.137 expenditure in that year was £4,334 (ex VAT).
23. **Period for the exercise of public rights** – Regulation 14 (1) stipulates that any rights of objection, inspection and questioning of the external auditor conferred by Sections 26 and 27 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 may only be **exercised within a single period of 30 working days**. Regulation 14(3) stipulates that during the period for the exercise of public rights a relevant authority must make the documents referred to in section 26(1) of the Act available for inspection on reasonable notice at all reasonable times. As the Clerk works part-time another person in the Authority should provide contact details to cover the times/days during the period when the clerk is not available. This is the responsibility of the Authority, not just the Clerk/Responsible Officer. **Council agreed the following motion:** "The period for the exercise of public rights will commence on 3 June 2026 and finish on 14 July 2026 and that Cllr Drake will cover dates and times when the Clerk is not available ".

Clerk/RD

24. **2025/26 Annual Accounts –** Council noted the year end accounts for the financial year 2025/26 (available on the website).

Ordinary Business

25. **Open Forum -** Parishioners of Berkswell were invited to address the Council on any relevant matter for a maximum of three minutes. There were no comments made.
26. **Borough Councillors' Report** – there was nothing significant to report.
27. **Planning Applications**
    a. At the request of residents, the clerk provides a running list of all planning applications received by the Parish Council. This list is updated on a weekly basis and can be accessed via the Planning Applications page on the Parish Council's website.
    b. Planning violation –
        i. Previously, Council had agreed Cllrs Edwards and Lloyd would liaise with the farmer regarding the unlawful diversion of footpath M192 at Ram Hall Farm, which has resulted in displacement of the accessible path into an area inconvenient for the exercise of the public right of way by the ordinary traffic of the neighbourhood.
        ii. Council noted correspondence from the Berkswell Estate concerning the footpath from Berkswell through Ram Hall. This is to be monitored especially next winter.

c. 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 that 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. Requests have been made to consider the following planning applications at this meeting:

Ref	Location	Proposal	Response Date
2026/00835	Land Adjacent To Land Intersecting Park Lane, To The North Of Lavender Hall Lane, Balsall Common	Schedule 17 Bringing into use - Paragraph 9(1): Scheduled Work Numbers: 3/7A Footpath M215 Accommodation overbridge	20 May 2026
Motion: Council strongly objects to this application as premature. This has no impact on the opening and use of the footpath over the bridge on a permissive basis, which we all want to happen as soon as possible. The original completion date was 8 years ago. **This motion was not supported.**			
PL/2026/00479/PPRM	Pheasant Oak Farm Hob Lane Berkswell Solihull.	Reserved matters submission for approval of Landscaping, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping for the erection of 250 dwellings, including discharge of conditions 6 (Design Code) and 9 (Surface Water Drainage Scheme) pursuant to outline planning permission ref: PL/2023/022140PPOL	
At the EM dated 20 April Berkswell Parish Council considered a request to seek an amendment to the approved land parameters plan to move the proposed orchard to the right of South View Farm, where the layout currently proposes housing, to protect the setting of the windmill. Council questioned whether the approved plan and proposed layout would have a potential detrimental impact on the windmill given the distance involved and the landscaping proposed. Chair has since spoken with Daniel Oliver, technical director at Vistry who advised that to accommodate the changes to the layout plan requested in respect of the windmill the Biodiversity Net Gain would be reduced as it would involve relocating houses thereby requiring the removal of existing hedges and trees on the site. Motion proposed: No further comments to be made to SMBC regarding this submission. **It was agreed that no further action was required.**			

d. Updates to Live Planning Applications – nothing to report

28. Financial Matters

Council noted the following:

a. The list of payments made using the Co-Operative Bank on-line service since the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 6 March 2026:

Payment made/scheduled	Date	Gross Amount £
Co-Operative Bank service charge/Commission	05/03/2026	8.40
A Burrow - batteries for Xmas lights	04/03/2026	75.00
Clerk's March Salary	16/03/2026	redacted
Q4 2025/26 Councillor Allowances	16/03/2026	1,916.80
Clerk's Month 11 Pension Contributions	23/03/2026	120.85
HMRC - Q4 2025/26 Tax & NI	31/03/2026	2,196.63
Balsall Common Methodist Church - Room Hire	05/03/2026	24.00
Clerk's reimbursements - Google workspace and IT component	05/03/2026	58.39
Kirkwells - NDP Review	16/03/2026	346.80
The Gaia Roots Foundation	16/03/2026	400.00
Fastaid - donation	27/03/2026	200.00
Co-Operative Bank - Bank charges	02/04/2026	11.55
WALC - 2026/27 Annual subscription	07/04/2026	1,081.00
Fairways - March grounds maintenance	07/04/2026	333.50
Clerks April salary	15/04/2026	redacted
GR Dawson - Churchyard maintenance Jan to Mar 2026	07/04/2026	936.00
Nest - Mnth 12 2025/26 - pension contributions	07/04/2026	120.85
Methodist Church room hire - 20 April	20/04/2026	24.00
Co-Operative Bank - Bank charges	05/05/2026	10.15
Methodist Church room hire - 18 May	06/05/2026	30.00
Clerk's Pay - adjustment to April Pay	15/05/2026	1.28
Clerks May salary	15/05/2026	redacted
Nest - Mnth 1 2026/27 - pension contributions	21/05/2026	125.85
Total (excluding Clerk's salary)		**8,021.05**

b. Payments received:
   - First half of precept amounting to £29,340.00 on 7 April 2026
   - Business Savings Account interest of £462.25 received on 2 April 2026

c. Bank Accounts balances
   - Council noted that the council's bank balances as at 6 May 2026 were:
     - Current Account £41,235.26
     - Savings Account £56,831.25
     - **Total Balance: £98,066.51**

d. Analysis of CIL Monies – Council noted the analysis of CIL monies received and spent since 2019 as prepared by the Clerk (copy available on Parish Council website). The analysis shows that all CIL monies received have been utilised in accordance with UK Government guidelines.

e. Grant Applications
   - Berkswell Church Poppy Displays – The Council has received a request for a donation towards the installation of a cascade of poppies on the church tower in November 2026 (full request available on the Parish Council website). Council to consider making a donation. **Council agreed to reimburse evidenced expenditure up to £500.** **Clerk**
   - St Peters Church Hall - Request for £1,000 towards the cost of 150 new chairs. The hall hosts over 15 regular groups per week, attended by over 600 visits per week spanning every day. Many of these groups are for local residents , which includes residents from Berkswell Parish. The whole local community will benefit from having a venue with chairs that is available for hire at a nominal rate. **Council agreed a grant of £1,000.** **Clerk**

- Jubilee Centre - Council to consider making a donation of £140 towards a new table tennis table. **Council agreed a grant of £140.** — **Clerk**

29. Risk Management

a. Council noted that quotes are awaited for the works recommended by the last asset inspection — **Clerk**

b. Council agreed that Cllrs Shadbolt and Lloyd will carry out the next physical assets inspection — **CS/RL**

30. Correspondence - nothing to report.

31. Training and Meetings not covered elsewhere on the Agenda.

a. Council noted the report from Councillor Drake of an informal meeting with the developer representatives for a proposed development at Old Waste Lane.

32. Ongoing References

a. **The War Memorial**

i. HS2Funds – Council noted that the Clerk has explored options to use up some of the excess funding from HS2Funds and concluded that none of them are viable or acceptable to the church. Council **agreed** to authorise the Clerk to finalise our claim to HS2Funds without further ado. — **Clerk**

ii. The clerk has been advised that the next 5 yearly inspection of the memorial is due. Quinquennial (who conducted the last inspection) has offered to provide a new Inspection Report at a cost £350 + VAT. Council **approved this proposal**. — **Clerk**

b. **HS2 -** Council **agreed** to a working group of Councillors Shadbolt, Lycett and Drake together with our Clerk, Richard Wilson, to meet with BBV and/or any other relevant parties to discuss any proposals relating to ownership etc of any legacy art installations. — **CS/AL/RD/ Clerk**

c. **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) -** SMBC have apologised for the delay in responding and should respond in due course.

d. **TPOs for trees on Barratts Farm (BC1)** - It came to light that the letter to SMBC was sent late and consequently SMBC have not responded as yet.

e. **Balsall Common Programme Manager** – nothing new to report

f. **Biodiversity Policy –** it was agreed to defer this item to the new combined Parish Council. — **Clerk**

g. **Governance Review** – Council noted that Solihull MBC approved the recommendation that Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council should be merged to form Balsall and Berkswell Parish Council with 15 councillors across 4 wards on 14th June 2026, from April 2027. Council **agreed** and nominated Cllrs Shadbolt & Drake and the Clerk to form a working party with Balsall Parish Council and their clerk with input from Matthew Rossi, Electoral Services Manager, to prepare and plan for a new merged Parish Council. The working party will regularly report progress back to both Parish Councils. — **CS/RD/ Clerk**

33. Heritage and Community

a. VASA

i. Council noted a report from VASA and help publicise the need for additional volunteer drivers.

ii. Council received a verbal report of the VASA Drivers social event which was attended by 6 drivers as well Councillors Shadbolt and Macdonald. Total cost was £65 of which Berkswell **agreed** to fund 1/3rd. — **Clerk**

34. Actions Arising from Previous Meetings - Council noted the status of agreed actions from previous meetings as circulated (a copy is available on the Council website).

35. Next Meetings

The Annual Parish Assembly will be held on 21 May in the Jordan Room, St John Baptist Church, Church Lane, Berkswell at 8:00pm

The next scheduled meeting of the Council will be an Ordinary Meeting to be held on 16 July at the Hornets Clubhouse, Lavender Hall Lane, Berkswell, commencing at 7:30pm.	