Balsall & Berkswell Parish Councils Joint Merger Working Group

9.30 am Monday 3rd August

Present: Richard Drake – JWG Chair (Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council), Tracey Carpenter (Clerk, Balsall Parish Council), Ja'Neen Day (WALC), Liz Macdonald (Balsall Parish Council), Charlotte Shadbolt (Berkswell Parish Council), David Slatter (Balsall Parish Council), Richard Wilson (Clerk, Berkswell Parish Council).

1. Project plan – comments on plan to RD to collate and feed back to JC. **Action: all JWG members to review plan and provide any feedback to RD. RD to advise JD ASAP.**
2. Name – agreed Balsall and Berkswell Parish Council in line with governance review.
3. Website – agreed new council brand will feed into the website but this does not prevent discussions on new website commencing. LM and CS agreed to work together in a task and finish group, potentially asking other councillors or residents for input. **Action: LM and CS to form T&FG and report back next time.**
4. Branding – DS has experience in branding. DS wishes to run branding workshop and then obtain quotes and choose a design agency to finalise a template package, logo etc for future use. There will be a cost which councils will need to approve. **Action: DS to organise date for councillors to attend brand workshop and liaise with design agencies to obtain quotes for work. DS to report back next time.**
5. Reporting progress to residents. Agreed this can be via websites and existing social media. Updates to be approved by full councils for release to public. **Action: JWG to form regular agenda item on council agendas, information thereafter to be available to report to residents – clerks, LM and CS.**
6. Financial Systems – RW uses scribe, easy to use but reports are not used, information downloaded into excel spreadsheets. TC uses edge, financial accounting system reasonable, reporting is fine but epitaph and heritedge are very good add on programmes which are used effectively to manage the cemetery. The support is good.

   All agreed edge the likely package to be used but RW and TC to get together to enable RW to assess the financial side of the package and the reporting. Liaise with support to assess if reports can be customised should this be needed for the future council. **Action RW and TC.**

7. Payroll – both councils use the same provider at present. **Action – RW agreed to email 3 payroll providers including existing, DCK payroll and one other for quotes for new council from 1 April 2027. RW will report back next time.**
8. Banking arrangements – agreed Unity Trust Bank will be used for the new council current account. T&FG to be set up to look at investment options, LM recommended the Banking Hub Guide produced by NALC. **Action – LM, RD and PW to form task and finish group to investigate banking arrangements and report back next time.**
9. Insurance quotes – JD will finalise data collection and produce amalgamated guide to send out to providers for quotes. Berkswell Parish Council currently uses Zurich Insurance and Balsall Parish Council Hiscocks, three quotes will be required. **Action point – JD to produce information to send out to insurers, update next time.**
10. Clerks workload – ensure there is one person on each council regularly liaising with the clerks to assess workload, CS will liaise with RW, LM with TC.
11. AOB – staff review – need to go through data provided with RW. Meeting agreed 11am Thursday 6th August on teams.
12. Next teams meeting agreed – 9.30am Friday 28th August – CS away and will attend if she can.