BERKSWELL PARISH COUNCIL – ORDINARY MEETING 12 NOVEMBER 2026

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 on 12 November 2026 in the in the Hornets Clubhouse, Lavender Hall Lane, Berkswell commencing at 7:30pm for the purpose of transacting the following business.

Mr R Wilson
Clerk to Berkswell Parish Council

6 November 2026

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 Parish councils - Berkswell Parish Council | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
5. **To approve Minutes of the following meetings:**
   Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – 10 September 2026
   Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – 11 September 2026
   Staffing Committee – 16 September 2026
   Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – 23 October 2026
   Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council – 3 November 2026
6. **Open Forum -** Parishioners of Berkswell are invited to address the Council on any relevant matter for a maximum of three minutes.
7. **Borough Councillors' Report**
8. **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 violations
   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. A request has been made to consider the following planning application at

this meeting:

Ref	Location	Proposal	Response Date
PL/2026/01884/PPFL	Land At Little Beanit Farm Waste Lane Balsall Common Solihull	Retrospective application for a temporary construction access track for a Battery Energy Storage System approved under planning approval PL/2022/02308/PPFL.	23/11/2026
Motion: Council to consider and agree the following comment*: Berkswell Parish Council is disappointed that this is a retrospective application and requests a condition is added to ensure the land is reinstated after use, for example hedgerows replanted.*			

d. Updates to Live Planning Applications – nothing to report

9. Financial Matters

a. The following is a list of payments made using the Co-Operative Bank on-line service since the Ordinary Meeting of the Council on 10 September 2026:

Payment made/scheduled	Date	Gross Amount £
Amazon - black printer ink	28/08/2026	27.99
Scribe 2026/27 Month 3 Fees - not allocated to an invoice	01/09/2026	48.38
Co-Operative Bank - Service charges	04/09/2026	9.10
Royal Mail - PO Box Subscription (payable monthly).	10/09/2026	50.40
Clerk's September Salary	15/09/2026	redacted
A Lycett - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	257.90
C Shadbolt - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	563.40
D Edwards - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	257.90
K Howles - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	257.90
R Lloyd - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	257.90
R Drake - Q2 2026-27 - Councillor Allowances	15/09/2026	193.30
NEST - Clerk's Month 5 Pension Contributions	21/09/2026	125.85
Fairways 26-09-115	01/10/2026	333.50
Balsall PC - Christmas Lights 2026	14/10/2026	2,000.00
Co-Operative Bank - Bank Charges	05/10/2026	12.95
Berkswell Society - Grant award	08/10/2026	600.00
Balsall Common Festival - Grant Award	12/10/2026	2,000.00
Jubilee Centre - room hire	08/10/2026	22.00
Clerk's Reimbursement Claim - October 2026	12/10/2026	174.16
Starboard Systems - Scribe Inv-23205	30/09/2026	48.38
Royal Mail - PO Box subscription (payable monthly)	12/10/2026	50.40
Clerk's October Pay	15/10/2026	redacted
GR Dawson - Burial Grounds maintenance Jul to Sept 2026	12/10/2026	1,008.00
GR Dawson - Burial Grounds maintenance Jul to Sept 2026	12/10/2026	1,008.00
HMRC Q2 Tax and NI	15/10/2026	2,426.49
Clerk's Month 6 Pension contributions	21/10/2026	125.85
Fairways 26-10-115	30/10/2026	333.50
Starboard Systems - Scribe support	30/10/2026	48.38
J Hickin - materials for Ad Hoc repairs	02/11/2026	104.22
Methodist Church - room hire 03.11.26	02/11/2026	12.00
Clerk – Reimbursement for Goole Workspace and Norton Anti-Virus etc	05/11/2026	197.18
Balsall & Berkswell Jubilee Project – room hire	05/11/2026	16.50
ANS Joinery – Ad hoc repairs to council assets	06/11/2026	166.00
Total (excluding Clerk's salary)		**£12,737.53**

b. Payments received:
   - Current Account - second instalment of 2026/27 precept of £29,340.00 received on 7 September 2026
   - Current Account - refund from Starboard System of £48.38 received on 10 September 2026
   - Business Savings account - interest of £533.29 received on 5 October 2026

c. Bank Account balances
   - Council to note that the council's bank balances as at 6 November 2026 were:
     - Current Account £28,836.67
     - Savings Account £74,364.54
     - **Total Balance: £**103,201.21

   In view of the size of the current account balance the Clerk recommends that a transfer of £15,000 should be made from the current account to the Business Savings Account.

d. Grant Applications
   - **Balsall Common Lions** – Request a grant towards the cost of replacement of the Lions garage roof at Balsall Common Village hall where the Santa sleigh and all other equipment is stored, the roof is currently asbestos cement panel, and is leaking badly, a certified contractor is required to remove it and replace it with suitable steel sheets. Estimated cost is £5,616.

e. Councillor Audit – Update to be provided

f. Council's Laptop – The Council's lap-top was purchased in November 2020 and is becoming increasingly difficult to operate. Council to approve the purchase of a suitable replacement for this lap-top at a cost up to £1,000.

10. Q2 2026/27 Management Accounts – Council to note the Q2 management accounts as circulated.

11. Risk Management – There is nothing to report at this time.

12. Correspondence

a. **Truggist Lane** - A resident of Truggist Lane has written to the Parish Council expressing concern for pedestrians using the lane given the volume of traffic, currently exacerbated by HS2 contruction. *Council to consider raising with SMBC Highways what measures can be taken to improve safety for all users of Truggist Lane.*

b. **Balsall Common Masterplan** - SMBC's Economic Development team have contacted the Clerk. They have been asked by their Scrutiny Board to discuss two of local centres as case studies and frame their approach to vision of place, street scene and support to respective centres. They are aware that there was a Balsall Common Masterplan commissioned a few years ago and wondered if it would be appropriate to discuss at the meeting and look at proposed interventions and any framework that could apply to other centres. Any information on how it was developed and what stage it is now at would be appreciated. Andrew Burrow has agreed to respond to SMBC on our behalf for which the Council thanks him for his support in this matter.

13. Ongoing References

a. **Solihull Local Plan** – Council to note that the consultation period ends at 11:59pm on Friday 11 December 2026. Council to confirm that a small working group (ideally involving representatives of both Balsall and Berkswell Parish Councils) be set up to produce a response. Council to receive and approve the proposed response at an EM in advance of the11 December deadline.

b. **The War Memorial** – The Quinnqenial Inspection Report identified some defects which were required to be rectified by the contractor who carried out the refurbishment of the War Memorial. Until these defects have been rectified to Quinquennial's satisfaction the retainer (£468.05 Ex VAT) cannot be released for payment. Until the retainer has been paid the Clerk cannot submit our final grant claim to HS2FUNDS who have been advised of the situation.

c. **HS2** – nothing new to report

d. **Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) –** awaiting a response from SMBC.

e. **Tree Works –** The Clerk has been trying to contact Midland Forestry (our current arboricultural advisers) with no success. It is possible that they are no longer operational. The Clerk has routinely commissioned a 3 yearly Tree Safety report which included recommended tree works for each of the following 3 years. This is now due. The Clerk has received two quotes to carry out the 2026 Tree Safety Inspection. The cheapest quote is £910.00 (Ex Vat) from Nicholsons with the other quote marginally more expensive (the last Tree Survey commissioned from Midland Forestry in June 2022 was £1,480). Neither company carry out the actual tree works. Council to agree the clerk's recommendation to commission Nicholsons in line with the above.

f. **Hedge Trimming –** Minute 14.a.ii of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 July 2026, gave council approval for the clerk to increase the Grounds Maintenance budget by £395 in the event that another hedge trim would be required within the contract year (i.e 2026). The Clerk has contacted Fairways to establish whether they advise a second trim during this calendar year or early in 2027. Council to authorise the Clerk to agree the best way forward and to commission Fairways to carry out the work for the quoted price.

g. **Ad Hoc Maintenance –** Council to note that the Clerk arranged for urgent repairs to the village stocks, which were representing a Health and Safety hazard, which were carried out on 30 October. At the same time a post on the village green was replaced and a bolt was attached to the gate on The Pound to stop it flapping open. The Clerk was given authorisation of up to £1,600 to carry out minor repairs under Minute 9.f. of the Ordinary meeting held on 10 September 2026. The work recently carried out has now been invoiced at a cost of £166.00. A list of remaining outstanding items is detailed in an agenda paper.

14. Training and Meetings not covered elsewhere on the agenda

15. Heritage and Community

a. **Berkswell Barbecue** – Update to be provided

b. **Berkswell Parish Christmas Decorations**

1. Council to note the budgeted figure of £1,000 (ex VAT) has been set for the purchase of Christmas trees, their installation and removal for the Balsall Common parts of the parish and Berkswell village green plus any replacement decorations required. However, the current estimate of costs are:
    i. The following trees are proposed: 7 x 7ft Norway Spruce, 1 x 10ft Norway Spruce and 1 x 15ft Norway Spruce which will cost £685.97 (ex VAT).
    ii. The cost of distribution, installing and disposal of the Christmas trees in 2025/26 was £480.
    iii. The cost of replacement tree lights in 2025/26 was £75.
2. Council to consider increasing the budget to £1,250 to cover costs in 2026/27.

c. **Pheasant Oak Farm Street Names** – Council to confirm that they accept the proposed Street Names for the Pheasant Oak/Hob Lane development.

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

17. Future Parish Council Meetings – Council to note that the 2026/27 Calendar of meetings, as approved by the Annual Meeting in May 2026, will need to be amended in light of the merger between Balsall and Berkswell PCs. There will be no meetings of Berkswell PC after 31 March 2027, there will be no Budget Setting Meeting in January 2027, the final Parish Assembly will be held on 4 March 2027 and the final Ordinary Meeting of Berkswell PC will be on 18 March 2027. In addition to these changes there are likely to be a number of Extraordinary Meetings as required by the merger process.

18. Governance Review

a. Council to note that since the EM of 23rd October, the newly constituted joint working group is meeting weekly to progress with work towards merging the councils. The joint working group recommends the following for approval by Berkswell Parish Council for the merged Balsall and Berkswell Parish Council, in line with their attached papers:

i. New website provider Aubergine at a cost of £660 per annum including link to Solihull planning portal, emails and domain (cost included in proposed budget see iv. below)

ii. Continue with existing payroll provider for Balsall Parish Council and Berkswell Parish Council, DM payroll (cost included in proposed budget see iv. below)

iii. Edge IT Systems Ltd for the accounting software. This provider is currently used by Balsall Parish Council for their accounting package and cemetery module (cost included in iv. below)

iv. Combined 2027/8 budget for Balsall and Berkswell Parish Council with precept total £217K (2025/6 £204K total), meaning for Band D property parish precept £48.46, an increase of £11.46 per annum (31%, 97p per month) for Berkswell Parish. The detailed budget has been put together using actual line by line costs with contingency built in. A £10K provision for one-off costs funded from reserves is also proposed.

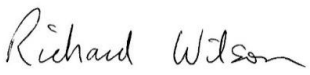
v. Expenditure of £300 to enable a TUPE briefing paper to be produced by WM Employers Ltd, a HR provider recommended by WALC. To enable the paper to be produced, details of all clerking staff job descriptions and contracts will be required. Cllr Shadbolt to request consent for information to be provided from Balsall Parish Council prior to the work being requisitioned.

vi. Approval for the meeting, committee and working group structure. Paper to be provided.

vii. WALC have been put on pause given the withdrawal of Balsall Parish Council from the process, approval for bill to be paid, £667 plus VAT for 1/3 of the cost.

viii. The merger is likely to go to the Governance Committee on 9th December following Balsall Parish Council's withdrawal from the process and request for the decision to be reviewed. Council to approve Cllrs Shadbolt and Drake to speak to the committee, content of discussion to reflect letter to A Kinsey dated 26 October.

19. Next Meeting - The next scheduled meeting of the Parish Council will be the Ordinary Meeting to be held on 14 January 2027 in the Hornets Clubhouse, Lavender Hall Lane, Berkswell commencing at 7:30pm.

Signed: Mr Richard Wilson  Clerk

Public and Press are welcome to attend