**Minutes of the meeting of Birdingbury Parish Council**

**17th June 2014, held at The Birbury, Birdingbury**

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| **Present** | |  |
|  | Councillors: D Turner (Chair), I Tipton, G Davy, T Healey and D Preston | |

**In Attendance**

Joanna Bloomfield (Clerk) and County Councillor Roberts.

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| 1. | **Welcome and apologies for absence**.  Councillor Turner opened the meeting and welcomed those present. |
| 2. | **To accept apologies for absence**.  There were no apologies for absence to accept. |
| 3. | **Declarations of interest.**  There were no declarations of interest. |
| 4. | **Representations from the public.**  There were no members of the public present. |
| 5. | **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.**  County Councillor Howard Roberts: the last Community Forum heard the Fire Chief speak about the proposed changes in the way the Fire & Rescue Service work. Councillor Roberts has been tasked with remodelling the service in light of the budget being reduced by £2.5m and the change in statistics with house fires now being a smaller proportion of the work and road traffic accidents an increasing part of the work. The process is expected to take several years and will include a reduction in personnel, a more responsive re-locating of equipment around the county and, at the end of their time, the replacement of the current fleet of vehicles with smaller, more efficient vehicles. It is hoped that response times to rural areas will fall in line with those in towns and cities.  Councillor Turner reported on a site meeting with Paul Manhood, held at the request of two residents, which raised questions of the value for money that tax payer were receiving from the poor quality of road repairs. Pot holes and road edges were being in-filled with insufficient amounts of tarmac and Councillors felt there seemed to be no challenging of contractors for the work done. Councillor Roberts suggested that the Council puts its concerns in an email to add to his collection of evidence, as well as any other issues they may have. |
| 6. | **Minutes of the last meeting.**  The minutes of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 20th May 2014 were unanimously approved and signed as a true record. |
| 7. | **Underground Coal Gasification**.  There was nothing to report but Councillors agreed to keep the item on the standing agenda. |
| 8. | **War Memorial Restoration**.  The date for the cleaning of the War Memorial has been postponed until the 14th/15th July. A group including members from the BPC, the PCC and the Birdingbury History Group have met and agreed a programme for the rededication which will take place at 3.00pm on Sunday 3rd August, for about 45 minutes. Although there will be some church involvement it will not be a wholly religious affair. As well as remembering those named on the War Memorial, three volunteers will talk about the impact of war on their families and the History Society will display historical information relating to the families, in the Birbury where refreshments will also be on offer. Bourton Trombones had been approached to play hymns and 1910s incidental music for the occasion and it was agreed to ask them if they had a PA system which could be used by the speakers. Councillor Tipton undertook to arrange for the road closure and Councillors discussed the whereabouts of the signage and whether a Risk Assessment would be required. The Clerk was asked to write a press release which could be sent to the local media and Councillor Turner will produce a flyer to be circulated around the village. |
| 9. | **The Recreation Field**  Councillor Healey was still looking into getting the hedge cut on the field side. Councillor Turner suggested that the person coming to cut her hedges, also cut the field hedge. The Country Show Committee had expressed a desire to donate a bench to the Recreation Field, to be placed by the hard surface area. It was agreed to accept the kind offer, and that the BPC would buy the other bench to replace the two which are now beyond repair. It was also agreed that the benches should be the same as the one by the bus shelter and ordered quickly as spare concrete will be available in the next few weeks to secure the benches in place. The Clerk was asked to refer to the last invoice for details and order the benches. Councillor Healey also reported that specialist wood preserver was needed for the wooden planks and any help in applying would be gratefully accepted, although it was not a job for youngsters. The swing bolt could be put in place when the concrete for the benches was put down. |
| 10. | **Reports from Councillors.**  **Councillor Davy** asked the Clerk for the names of those who had volunteered to help with the bonfire and fireworks at the Annual Village Meeting. She also reported back from the trustees of Birdingbury First Homes who built Masters Court, who had, as requested, considered the proposal raised by a resident at the last BPC and looked into whether these houses may be offered to older members of the village wishing to down-size but remain in Birdingbury, as highlighted by the Housing Needs Survey. The original 1991 agreement includes a permanent covenant which defines a qualifying purchaser as a ‘first time purchaser’ and therefore would exclude ‘downsizers’ from applying. Councillor Tipton agreed to report back to the resident who raised the question.  **Councillor Tipton** suggested that, in the absence of Borough and County Councillor oversight, the Parish Council should act as inspectors of work carried out. If things have been done, it would be useful to know when.  **Councillor Turner** reported that a resident had complained about litter from MacDonalds appearing in the village. She had asked that, if possible, a photograph of the litter which identifies the location and the date is passed to the Council so that evidence can be collated. Residents who walk around the village outskirts are particularly asked to keep a look out. She also suggested that another litter pick be held in September.  Councillors discussed ordering a free dog fouling bin from RBC which would also be emptied by them for free. After some discussion it was agreed not to order the bin but to put a sign on the litter bin by the bus stop to remind villagers to dispose of their own dogs fouling at home.  An issue had been raised at Swapshop about the availability of mobile phone coverage in the village. A resident had been unable to have a smart meter fitted because the signal was not sufficient. Councillors discussed the massive increase in the use of mobile technology, including GPS, since the subject was last discussed by the village. The upgrading of the Princethorpe mast should improve the quality of the signal for all users, not just those on 4G. Councillors decided to research the timescale of the upgrades and put the matter on the agenda for the next meeting.  The Neighbourhood Watch had reported a number of garden shed burglaries and recognition for PCSO Helena Steadman. |
| 11. | **Correspondence requiring attention** (and not elsewhere on the Agenda).   * Overview & Scrutiny. Councillors agreed that BPC was better served by taking their concerns directly to County Councillor Roberts. * Rural Housing Policy Review. Councillors reviewed the questions and asked the Clerk to forward. |
| 12. | **Financial Issues**  12.1 The following cheques were approved:   * Clerk’s fees and expenses – May: 000576 - £379.97 * Web hosting: 000577 - £45.22 * MFM grass cutting: 000578 - £451.00 * Willoughby Challenge: 000579 - £80.00   12.2 The financial statement was circulated. |
| 13. | **Planning Issues**.  There were no Planning Issues for discussion. |
| 14. | **Highways**  On Friday 30th May, Councillors met with a resident and Paul Manhood from County Highways to discuss the condition of the road verges and pot holes on Long Itchington Road. Councillor Tipton reported that there was basic agreement that the road needs to be kerbed and weight restrictions applied, but that this was unlikely to happen in the near future. Widening the road would simply increase the speed. When the verge soil gets turned up, the rain drags it down and fills the drains. The Birdingbury Club Committee had agreed that the car park could be used by walkers but they did not want signs put up – if any people were seen looking to park in the village, they should be directed to the car park. |
| 15. | **Newcomers to the village**  There were no newcomers to the village. |
| 16. | **Business considered urgent by the Chair** (and not elsewhere on the Agenda)  There was no further business considered urgent by the Chair. |
| 17. | **Date of next meetings**  The next Birdingbury Parish Council will take place on **Tuesday 15th July 2014**. |
|  | There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.05pm  Signed ................................................................ (Chair)  Date .................................................................. |