

Parish Council Chair's Report for Oct/Nov 2021 Birdsong

The September PC meeting had the longest agenda that I can remember, partly due to our summer break (we don't have a meeting in holiday-heavy August), but also because there are several activities in the village that needed to be discussed. It was lovely to see 8 or 9 follow villagers attending and we shifted the agenda around so that they could leave, if they wanted, after the juicier bits ...

Top billing should probably go to the planning application for the 5G mast (on the roadside at the Marton edge of the village). Councillors have held several site visits to assess the impact of the proposed installation and concluded that the selected location is far from ideal due to its proximity to houses and its position close to the road near a blind hill crest. The mast would have a major visual impact, and so would the range of metal boxes at its base so close to the main entrance to the village. We have submitted a long response to the Planning team detailing our concerns.

We also discussed the effects of the recent installation of a wood burner by one of the units on the business park which has caused complaints about smoke and smells. The installation has been approved by RBC's Planning team, so issues stemming from its use would be dealt with by the Environmental Health team. The Council agreed to write to Environmental Health to make them aware of concerns, but also to write to the owners as they have shared on Facebook that they are in a testing phase, so we have asked for more details on plans to minimise its impact on neighbours. Our clerk, Jackie, has asked me to remind everyone that in any situation like this Environmental Health are more likely to respond to a resident who has kept a record of the date & time when problems occurred than to a Parish Council raising a general concern.

There has been no new activity regarding the proposed development plans for the Glebe Field. We saw a reassuring note from the Diocesan Board to the PCC over the Summer and have heard nothing since from Landstrom. We are writing to the Diocesan Board confirming that we do not support Landstrom's proposal so, hopefully, that may be the end of that. Less helpful is the silence from RBC on the lawful use application for the business park units which is now over a year beyond its 'decision date'. We are writing to RBC Planning and escalating this to the Council Chief Executive.

We covered several other items in the marathon meeting, so some highlights:

- The slow grinding of gears within Openreach suggests that there is "hope for movement soon" on fibre broadband.
- Some of our village assets need some TLC, particularly the phone box/defibrillator and the bus stop paintwork. We are getting quotes but if anyone in the village has the skills and time, please contact Jackie on parishclerk@birdingbury.org with a quote or for details.
- In a break with tradition Parish Council meetings in future will switch to the third Monday monthly rather than third Tuesday. We don't expect the world to end because of this historic change, but if it does ... sorry!

And finally, we also discussed the Queen's Jubilee next year. There is a national scheme to use the Jubilee as a trigger to plant trees ('The Queen's Green Canopy') and we discussed how the village could support this. There is also a double Bank Holiday on Thursday 2nd and Friday 3rd June, so it would be great if there were community-led activities for all to enjoy over that long weekend. I am writing to the other village groups to see if there is interest in a working party of some sort, but if anyone is interested or has any suggestions, please do let me know (guyfrenchpc@gmail.com).