

Minutes of the meeting of Birdingbury Parish Council
19th November 2013, held at The Birbury, Birdingbury

Present

Councillors: D Turner (Chair), I Tipton, G Davy and T Healey, and Borough Councillor Hazelton and County Councillor Howard Roberts.

In Attendance

Joanna Bloomfield (Clerk) and one member of the public.

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 representations from the public.

5. **Reports from Borough and County Councillors.**

As neither Councillor Hazelton nor Roberts were in attendance, it was decided that they would be able to report when they arrived.

6. **Minutes of the last meeting.**

The minutes of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th October 2013 were unanimously approved and signed as a true record.

7. **Casual Vacancy.**

The Chair welcomed David Preston to the meeting. It was proposed and unanimously agreed to co-opt David Preston as a Birdingbury Parish Councillor. The 'Acceptance of Office' was signed immediately and Councillor Turner congratulated Councillor Preston on his becoming a Councillor.

8. **Underground Coal Gasification.**

A number of Birdingbury residents had attended a recent meeting at Eathorpe and contact between groups was being arranged. Larger groups are based in Rugby and Leamington Spa. The BPC decided to keep a watching brief on proceedings and report back to the Council/village as needed. It was also agreed that clarity was required when discussing the subject as there was some confusion in the minds of the public between 'fracking' which was in the national conversation (and not a problem to the water supply, according to the Water Authorities) and 'underground coal gasification' which was being proposed locally. An involved resident was putting an article in Birdsong and had written to Jeremy Wright.

9. **PCC/Allotment rent.**

The Clerk reported that she had received the rent from the Allotment Society and passed it on to the PCC.

10. **State of the Jitty, Back Lane.**

Councillor Turner reported that she had been approached by a resident concerned about the state of the Jitty, who complained that money had been spent on Main Street but nowhere else. The Jitty has been under discussion during the last 12-18 months. The previous Head of Highways had marked up the path for skimming but re-assessed the need as a complete digging-out and re-surfacing, work the WCC did not have a budget for. The BPC was quoted £8,000 for having the work done at the same time as the steps in Back Lane were replaced, but this was beyond the means of the BPC. Since then the Jitty has deteriorated, becoming a Health and Safety issue. The Clerk was asked to write to Rugby Borough Council pointing out the hazardous condition of the path and asking them to undertake an inspection and risk assessment, copying in the Borough and District Councillors.

11. **The War Memorial.**

The Clerk reported that she has received an email from The War Memorials Trust which indicated that 'the project may be eligible for the Small Grant Scheme'. As the application form asked whether any further grants were being sought, the BPC decided to wait to hear the outcome of the District Councillor's Grant Fund application (due on the 6th December) before sending the application, as this may have a bearing on decision of the War Memorials Trust. Leslie Turner undertook to find out the history of the War Memorial and forward to the Clerk for inclusion on the application form.

12. **The Recreation Field.**

Councillor Healey reported on work in hand, and that an application to the District Councillor's Grant Fund had been made which could hopefully cover some of the cost of repair/upgrading. The BPC asked the Clerk to write to David Harrison thanking him for all his brilliant work as unpaid handyman. Unused wood from the bus shelter is to be used to repair the benches. Following an email from a resident, the Clerk had informed County Highways about the damage to the safety rail at the entrance to the Recreation Field. The base is still solid and doesn't move, so still does what it is intended to do. Councillors agreed that the BPC/residents should not attempt to repair the safety rail as over-strengthening can be as dangerous as under-strengthening. Looking around the village, most of the signs are bent. Birdingbury Estates has been approached about flaying the hedge and reducing nettles, which they undertook to do once their autumn work was completed. Councillor Davy offered to lob back some of the overgrowth, accompanied by Councillor Turner.

13. **Housing Need Survey**

The BPC had received an email from Richard Mugglestone of Midlands Rural Housing indicating response statistics. A written report with is due in the next few weeks and will be on the agenda for the January meeting.

14. **Rugby Mayor's Request**

The BPC discussed the Mayor of Rugby's request for a photograph/picture which summarized the parish, to be included in an art work which will be displayed at the Mayor's Chamber. The Council were unanimous in their opinion that a picture of the new bus shelter should be submitted with a citation indicating how proud the village was of the way in which the raising of funds, the design, the construction and final presentation of the bus shelter exemplified the spirit of the village.

15a. **Reports from Councillors** (other than Planning and Highway Issues).

Borough Councillor Hazelton:

- The Chair explained the discussion the meeting had had about the Jitty, which gave access to houses of elderly resident. Councillor Hazelton expressed concern that the onset of a bad winter could cause a trip hazard and named Sean Lawson as the person to contact at Rugby Borough Council.
- Councillor Hazelton reported that he was waiting for feedback on the idea of spreading money between the villages which had problems with flooding and/or drains, which was raised at the Joint Forum meeting on the 11th November.

16. **Correspondence requiring action** (and not elsewhere on the Agenda).

The WCC Primary Gritting Routes: the primary routes are the same as last year ie not including Bourton Hill. The BPC asked the Clerk to write to the WCC reminding them that this is a school bus route and a major route out of the village. There is not a good way out of the village as it lies in a valley which is very limiting if the roads are not maintained. Getting on the Marton Road from Main Street is impossible in icy conditions without the use of a 4x4. In the past there have been three grit bins: one near the Hall, one at the junction of Main Street and Back Lane and one outside the Club. The grit bin outside the Club is solid and the one at the junction (on the corner by the ash tree) is missing. The BPC asked the Clerk to write to WCC requesting the replacement of the bin outside the Club, the reinstatement of the bin at the junction and the refilling all three.

17. **Financial Issues.**

15.1 The following cheques were approved for signing:

- PCC re Allotment rent – 000555: £85.00
- MFM Services – 000556: £306.00
- Clerk's fees and expenses – 000557: £249.17
- Walsgrave Contractors re bus shelter – 000559: £180.00
- D. Stevens re website hosting – 000560: £45.22
- Distribution Fund re bus shelter – 000561: £43.86

15.2 The financial statement was circulated. Councillors decided to return the £43.86 left in the Bus Shelter Fund to Village Distribution Fund.

15.3 Councillors discussed the Precept request for 2014-2015 and, in light of the financial statement, decided not to increase the amount asked for. The financial priorities for the coming year are: the restoration of the War Memorial, the repair/up-grading of equipment in the Recreation Field and a possible contribution to the digging-out and resurfacing of the Jitty, as the BPC considered skimming of the path an inadequate solution.

18. **Planning Issues.**

- R13/1999 – Davenport Cottage, Back Lane: As this was a listed building consent, the BPC decided to offer 'no comments'.
- R13/1724 – The Lodge, Frankton Road: Councillors Turner and Healey visited, the BPC decided to offer 'no comments'.
- The Clerk had written to the Compliance Officer at Rugby Borough Council, and received a statement that all purchasers of property at Masters' Court had complied with Section 106.

15b. **Report from County Councillor Roberts**

- The Chair explained the discussion the meeting had had about the Jitty, adding that one of the resident feels that she cannot get out. Councillor Roberts asked to be kept in the loop and was happy to do any intervention required. The BPC questioned whether some form of contribution would help the situation. Councillor Roberts reported that work was to be done in Dunchurch at some point, and it may be possible to include Jitty on itinerary.
- The Chair explained the discussion the meeting had had about the gritting routes and grit bins. Councillor Roberts reported that no pavements or cycle routes are to be gritted and asked to be copied into the letter sent by BPC to Highways about gritting: rural travel not usually for fun. If the BPC buy grit bins, the County will fill them. Need to make the case for a bin at the Jitty, demonstrate it is a well used path. The Chair said that the issue of gritting is raised at every Annual Village Meeting. Grit can also cause problems, making snow melt and create ice.
- Councillor Roberts reported that he had heard from Paul Manhood (Head of Highways) who had spent three hours in the village on the 11th October inspecting drains.
- The WCC Licensing Authority has asked for more information regarding the Underground Coal Gasification and was awaiting a reply.
- The WCC Energy Policy, including provision for wind farms and voltaic panels, was on a fast track consultation. Rugby Borough Council is producing a wind map for information.
- The WCC budget cuts amount to £95m over next four years but will be unequally phased. Councillor Roberts estimates an £8m wiggle room. There is no majority in the WCC, so Independents hold the balance. There is to be a key meeting in February.

19. **Highways.**

- Graham Stanley had reported back from the meeting of the 22nd October, advising that County Highways had agreed to marking the dragon's teeth at the entrances to the village and would let BPC know when Balfour Beatty had advised of a date for the work.
- The safety barrier by the Recreation Field was discussed earlier in the meeting. Councillor Roberts added that Paul Manhood was on the case.

20. **Newcomers to the village.**

There were no newcomers to the village since the last meeting.

21. **Business considered urgent by the Chair** (and not elsewhere on the Agenda).

There was no business considered urgent by the Chair and not discussed elsewhere.

22. **Date of next meeting** – Tuesday 21st January 2014

There being no further business, the Chair wished the Councillors and Clerk a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and closed the meeting at 9.00pm

Signed (Chair)

Date

