

Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council NEWSLETTER



Annual
Community
group reports

Number 51 March 2013

incorporating the Annual Report



Parish Council Meetings are usually held on the first Monday of the month at 7.30pm – a councillor is available from 7.10pm
Meetings include allotted time for questions from the public – all residents are most welcome to attend.

Forthcoming dates: 8th April (7pm), Lickey • 13th May, Blackwell • 3rd June, Lickey

www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org

www.parishblog.org

Bilberry Hill Tea Rooms, postcard c.1904

foreword



This council year has seen the resignations of four of our Councillors so I would like to start by acknowledging their work. Ashley Hayden worked enthusiastically for the brief period he was with us and we wish him well in his future career. James Green worked doggedly as our Highways representative. Tony Flynn was tireless on the Environment Group, steering through projects such as our VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) purchase. But the biggest hole was left by John Williams, a former Chairman, served on the PC for seven years. His knowledge, experience, support and kindness are greatly missed. They all contributed a great deal to the Council and we offer them our grateful thanks.

I must also thank my fellow Councillors for choosing me as their Chairman. It has been a privilege. Our new Vice Chairman is Kathryn Crockett and I thank her and the remaining three stalwarts, Janet King, Peter Harvey and Jo Eales for stepping up to the mark and carrying through our work in the last three months. In March we welcomed two new Councillors, Paul Clarke (Shepley) and Nick Forknell (Lickey Monument). We will feature our new councillors in the next newsletter. The Council still needs two more Councillors, one for Shepley and another for Linthurst Wards to get back to full strength.

Working groups

Because of the loss of nearly half of our Councillors this year, there has been a reorganisation of how we work. The Planning Committee must have three members: myself, Jill Harvey (lead), Jo Eales and Janet King. Finance Working Group is led by Peter Harvey. Jo has done sterling work as the Environment lead, with Janet (lead) and myself, on Communications and Social Services. It has not been ideal, but with our two new Councillors we hope normal service will be resumed!

Challenges

In my last report I commented on how the cuts that our county and district councils are facing may affect our parish. We hope to be able to step in where there are shortfalls in provision where it is possible. Our local knowledge helps us focus on what is important to be done. For example, recently we cut back undergrowth to the footpath off Lickey Rock which somehow had been omitted from the County Council's maintenance regime for several years, by re-allocating funds to do the work.

The Future

We expect to be working even more closely with residents, as we initiate work on a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish. This must be done in consultation with residents, community organisations, businesses and landowners. If anyone would like to get involved, either as part of the steering group or as a consultee, then please come along to the Annual Assembly on April 8th or contact our EO.

finance



Below is a copy of the summary Receipt and Payment Account for the year ending 31st March 2012. These accounts have been audited by both internal and external auditors, and we are required to report them to you.

LICKEY AND BLACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL			
Summary Receipts and Payments Account 2011/12			
2010/2011	RECEIPTS	2011/2012	
£		£	
£ 48,700.00	Precept*	£ 64,734.00	
£ 105.00	Cemetery, recreation grounds & litter picking	£ 105.00	
£ 42.00	Interest received	£ 47.52	
£ 454.00	VAT Refunds	£ 1,298.23	
£ 1,869.00	Lengthsman	£ 2,400.45	
£ 1,941.00	Other income	£ 1,120.00	
£ 53,111.00	TOTAL	£ 69,705.20	
PAYMENTS			
£ 5,973.00	General administration	£ 5,489.42	
£ 20,239.00	Salaries & staff expenses	£ 10,472.50	
£ 10,075.00	Play areas and open spaces	£ 10,460.67	
£ 529.00	Donations and grants	£ 510.00	
£ 3,138.00	Highways/litter picking	£ 4,043.90	
£ 2,550.00	Cemetery maintenance	£ 2,920.00	
£ 5,382.00	Newsletter	£ 5,286.49	
£ 932.00	VAT paid	£ 1,110.39	
£ 48,818.00	TOTAL	£ 40,293.37	
£ 4,293.00	Surplus/(Deficit)	£ 29,411.83	
* please note this figure includes 50% of the 12/13 precept			
The above statements represent fairly the financial position of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2012			
Approved by the council on 14th May 2012			

The content of this Annual Report relates to activity during the year ending 31st March 2013. The accounts for this period have not been audited but the expenditure detailed in this report relates to the year ended 31st March 2013. The audited figures will appear in the next Annual Report in April 2014.

The precept remained unchanged at £43,156. The largest area of expenditure was again Highways and Environment with a spend of £17,870. An additional £1,415 was spent on the Lickey cemetery as £1,500 had been budgeted for election expenses, and in the event, no expense was incurred. Administration totalled £16,260 which included the Executive Officers salary, NI, training and expenses, insurance, audit fees and all hall hire and caretaking.

A further £6,657 was spent on the areas of Communication and Social Services with the single largest item being the quarterly newsletter at £4,909. In addition, this includes grants, the cost of Christmas trees, lights and lighting ceremonies, our Best Front Garden Competition and other residents' meetings held throughout the course of the year.

environment



The Parish Council continues to work to maintain and improve the environment.

We have continued the work done in previous years namely the Lickey Cemetery extension mowing and other small areas around the Parish; surveying and maintaining footpaths; High House Wood and Greenfield Bank maintenance; litter picking and planters.

Additional work has been performed in the Lickey cemetery extension this year. The Parish Council, working alongside Lickey Church, undertook to clear the site of brambles, weeds and self set ash trees. The hedgerows on all sides were also cut back with special attention to those overhanging the footpaths running through the cemetery. The Trinity garden was also cleared. The Council has agreed to continue to maintain the churchyard extension in the next financial year.



Greenfield Bank has been substantially improved this year with the upper section cleared and planted. As ground cover, trees and shrubs become established it is anticipated that maintenance will become easier. The Council would like to thank Jane Banner and Ron Smith for their hard work on this project.

In the autumn daffodil bulbs were planted in the verge opposite Dale Hill - hopefully these will create a splendid display in spring-time.

The Parish Council wish to express thanks to Ron Smith for maintaining the parish planters. The Parish would be a poorer place without our employees and volunteers. Thanks must also go to our new litter picker, Ken Cook, whose report is printed below, who replaces Alistair Hick, and to Phil Grantham and Andrew Woods for their work keeping our footpaths clear.



Lastly, residents in Linthurst Newtown will have seen the new Silver Birch tree that has been planted. They can also look forward to a replacement bench that should be in place very soon.

Litter Picking by Ken Cook

As the parish litter picker I am pleased to have this opportunity to tell you something about what I do. My prime objective is to clear litter and rubbish from the area, and report anything that is too heavy or bulky for me. I have a list of roads designated for attention. Of these, certain ones, such as Rose Hill, part of old Birmingham Road and Monument Lane require regular attention. The others I do as I can. Some time ago I reported to the council that 8 hours a month was not enough time and I was barely scratching the surface. I now do more hours and cover the area more thoroughly.

There are areas that are generally litter free – and then there are the bad ones! Blackwell is generally not too bad but St Catherine's Road does attract litter and around the corner into Linthurst Road up to the motorway. The worse areas are Brookhouse Road, Rose Hill, Monument Lane, Littleheath Lane parts of Old Birmingham Road and around the Lickey Hills. I recently spent a few hours on Alvechurch Highway collecting 3 bin bags and could have spent all day there. Some areas are too dangerous to work on including the middle of Greenhill and Linehouse Lane. I only go out when the roads are quiet and always wear a high visibility vest and listen out for vehicles.

I do hope this has given you an insight into the litter problem areas and what I do.

Ken

highways



Road conditions, speeding, parking, pot holes and gritting are subjects close to residents hearts – issues on which the PC often receives correspondence. Worcestershire County Council (WCC) are responsible for maintaining the road system and, with our County Councillors, we endeavour to get the issues in our parish addressed.

We have had large stretches of both Twatling Road and Linthurst Newtown resurfaced, but many potholes still remain. Reporting potholes and other defects through the Worcestershire Hub means that they will be inspected though not necessarily repaired.



Our feedback from the last bout of snowy weather was positive, the roads were gritted and the grit bins filled and the bad weather, although prolonged, did not lead to the chaos seen in the past along roads like Rose Hill. Many of the more minor roads were also gritted, including Cherry Hill Road which makes access so much easier. Our thanks go to Ron Rand, our lengthsman, who in bad weather backs up the work done by the County Highways team, gritting minor roads and replenishing the grit supplied in our bins.

The PC purchased a speed indicating sign, which is being moved to various approved sites in the parish. We very much hope that the sign will serve to reduce speeding wherever it is used.

What is your Parish Lengthsman?

You may have seen your Parish Lengthsman working along the roads and lanes of Lickey and Blackwell. He is appointed by your Parish Council and funded by the Highways Division of WCC for around four hours per week to undertake minor highway works in the local area such as the cleaning of road signs, clearing road gully grids, reporting pot-holes and, if possible, rod blocked drains near the highway.

Numerous other works undertaken include the installation and maintenance of Vehicle Activated Signs, funded by your PC, at designated points to warn motorists of their excessive speed. You may have seen these in operation on Rose Hill and Brookhouse Road, where there are issues with speeding vehicles.

Gritting of vulnerable areas in times of ice & snow is also undertaken at short notice, both from yellow bins, provided by WCC and green bins funded by your PC, so if you see his vehicle with flashing yellow lights, please remember: He is working for your benefit. He is your Lengthsman!



David Hodges & team
clearing snow, Blackwell Jan '13

planning



The Committee handled about 50 applications in 2012/13, a reduction from previous years

Most were from residents improving their homes, with a small number from local businesses. They are available to view on our website.

Neighbourhood Planning

Communities are being encouraged to formulate Neighbourhood Plans, in order to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work.

Neighbourhood Plans should be compatible with the District plan and can be used to:

- choose where to build homes & other developments
- identify and protect important local green spaces
- influence what new buildings should look like.

The Parish Council can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, but it must be done in consultation with residents, community organisations, businesses and landowners. It is to this end that we are using the Parish Assembly to launch a Plan for our Parish. If anyone would like to get involved, then please come along on April 8th or contact our EO.

Blackwell Bus Shelter

Having resorted to the Small Claims Court, the PC received the money promised in compensation for the loss of the bus shelter at Greenhill. We are considering re-instating on Greenhill and possibly erecting a new one further along Linthurst Newtown where the school bus stops. However, despite asking for feedback in our newsletters, we have had only 2 letters – one for each site. It is hard to justify spending several thousand pounds without strong support. So come on Blackwell residents – give us your views!

Marlbrook Tip

The Parish Council is as frustrated as our residents with the lack of progress on the issue of over-tipping on Marlbrook Tip. We have been told since last summer that an Enforcement Notice was imminent. But none has been issued to date. The Public Meeting scheduled for February has been postponed due to concerns from the lawyers working for Bromsgrove District. At our PC Meeting in March it was reported that the Enforcement Notice was very close to being completed. Hopefully we will have better news to report in a year's time!

The Value of Volunteers

by Adam Noon, ranger

The Lickey Hills Rangers have always benefited from the useful contribution made by volunteers. In recent years due to the focused efforts of the ranger team the number of volunteers and the work they carry out has grown significantly. Against a challenging background of council cuts and reductions in parks staff, volunteers are now regarded by the rangers as a crucial component of site management.



The Lickey Hills attracts a huge variety of volunteers of all ages and abilities, from all walks of life, who come as individuals or groups. Some help out on a one-off basis whilst others become regular volunteers. Everyone is welcomed, greeted with a smile and a warm or cold drink, weather depending. Some like to help out in the office or visitor centre, whilst others roll up their sleeves working outdoors with site management and conservation tasks.

During 2012, the rangers worked with over 500 different volunteers on the Lickey Hills and other parks throughout the Northfield Constituency.

We have volunteers from The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) through their Green Gym programme, a group of predominantly local conservation volunteers called the Habitat Heroes, and others from a project called Phoenix Futures who are enrolled on a drug and alcohol recovery programme called Recovery Through Nature. On Sundays, the rangers are assisted by young people working towards their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

The rangers also benefit from working with the volunteers from nine Friends of groups, like the Friends of Balaam's Wood LNR, Friends of Kings Norton Park and the Lickey Hills Society who champion their local green spaces and reserves.

In addition to these regular groups, the rangers are always pleased to accommodate corporate social responsibility

(CSR) groups - volunteers from businesses that encourage their employees to leave their offices to work on projects to benefit the local environment or community. During the last year CSR teams from Orange, PricewaterhouseCoopers, NPower, Calor Gas, TD Direct Investing and Lloyds TSB have all participated.

This invaluable volunteer contribution has enabled us to achieve an enormous number of projects. During 2012 some of the highlights include the creation of several community orchards, wildflower meadows and a wildlife pond, building footpaths, bridges, steps and fences, planting trees, clearing invasive weeds, surveying woodlands, removing trees and scrub from heathland and the production of the Lickey Hills Country Park Great Walks booklet.

As staff levels are reduced and budgets slashed, the value of volunteers becomes evermore apparent. Whether volunteers will ultimately replace salaried parks employees is a question for the politicians.

In the meantime if you have a spare hour and want to help out then please contact the ranger team. There are many varied projects, training will be provided and all help is warmly appreciated.

Adam

social services & communications

This combined group has responsibility for the provision of services which improve parish life for our residents. We install and maintain leisure facilities such as the children's playground and goal posts on the St Catherine's Road playing field. Much of our work is with other agencies such as the County Council for the provision of a reasonable public transport service and West Mercia local police for crime prevention.

We are also responsible for communicating regularly with our residents through the quarterly newsletter, the annual report, our website, the parish blog (www.parishblog.org) and our notice boards, which also carry community notices.

Residents' Meetings bring our busy residents together and are proving a popular way of including all ages in the parish

Transport

During the year, transport services were maintained to the September 2011 timetable but we understand that the County Council is now talking to the Longbridge developers about the use of infrastructure levy to improve the 145 service. Annette More of WCC Passenger Transport Dept. listened to older residents' concerns about local bus services at our February residents meeting (see below) and hopefully we shall see some improvements.

The group responded to a WRVS survey of community transport needs in 2012 and at the same meeting David Muggeridge spoke about BURT (Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport) and Rural Rides, which WRVS organise. Rural Rides depends on volunteer drivers (45p per mile allowance) and David would like to hear from anyone interested in offering their services – 01527 879 290.

Bringing residents together

Where is the focal point of the parish? For some it is our schools, for others the social club, the village stores, scouting groups, our local churches, the sports activities at our village halls, meeting places for a number of societies described later in this report. For some it is simply home. We should like to express our gratitude to some of the some people who keep our village alive.

Dena and John Jenks have succeeded in making the village stores a great place to shop, offering a friendly atmosphere as well as an excellent retail service. Their first anniversary at the village stores was celebrated with a hog roast. This year our local WIs will be joining thousands of others to pass a resolution at their AGM in June calling on everyone to support their local shops. It is certainly not difficult to do this in Blackwell!

Jamie Chapman and the committee continue to provide a popular programme of events at Blackwell Social Club, not interrupted by the birth of baby Millie in 2012. Congratulations, Jamie!



Residents' Meetings

• Transport event

As already mentioned, in February the topic at our residents' tea party was local transport (pictured above). Forty residents enjoyed an excellent tea prepared by Geoff Hickman and left better informed about their community transport and local bus services.

• Best Front Garden Competition event

This competition, during which all gardens are judged by a team of professional gardeners, last year's winners, councillors and council employees, allows us to recognise the work and creativity which goes into producing the attractive gardens which make our parish so appealing.



This annual competition took place in early September and the well deserved prizes were presented at Blackwell Court on 7th October by Keith Woolford who also showed a preview of his Blackwell Community Games series of films. Winners Burcot Grange are pictured above.

Thanks to all our judges, who gave their time freely, and to Nikki Gow of FRESH for generously donating the prizes once again.

Congratulations to all our winners, who set a very high standard for next year's competition, which will be Spring gardens and will be judged in May.

• Greening our Parish event

A knowledgeable panel of speakers tackled the theme of reducing the community's carbon footprint and household energy bills at Lickey Hills Primary School. Speakers included Prof. Erik Bichard of Salford University, who talked about motivation, Cllr. Gary Charnock from Ashton Hayes, (a village aiming to be the first in England to reach zero carbon), and local architect David Edwards, who designs energy efficient buildings using recycled materials. We also heard from the school's eco warriors, teacher Sarah Yates, and residents who have solar panels. As a result of the meeting a panel of advisers has been formed, who will pass on information to anyone thinking of 'going green'.



• Christmas Events

In conjunction with our two schools, the parish council organises an annual competition for art and the written word. The theme was '2012 – a Very Special Year' and we were delighted with the pictures, poems and excellent short story of the Jubilee, Olympics and personal celebrations.



The prizes were presented by Father Christmas at Blackwell village hall at our tree lighting event and at Trinity Centre at a joint event with Trinity Centre users with Revd. Margaret Brighton as MC – a winning entry pictured above. The theme for 2013 will be announced in the Summer newsletter.

Policing

Our parish is classed as a low crime area but nevertheless we do value the local policing team. Details appear on the contact page.

Leisure

We continue to provide safety checks and maintenance of the children's play area and goal posts and to contribute financially to community events. In 2012, we were pleased to give £250 to Blackwell Community Games, (pictured top, right) which brought local people together in a week of sporting events for all. We should like to express our thanks to Angus Watson and his team for organising the event. We understand that the group is reconvening with the aim of organising a local festival in July 2013.



Parish Poets in Residence

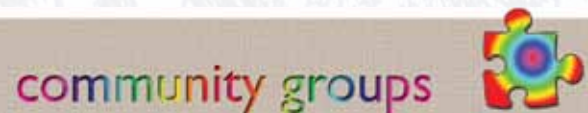
Lickey and Blackwell is the only parish in the County (maybe the country) which has its own Poet in Residence – well, two actually. Jake Perryman, Bromsgrove School head boy, and teacher James Smith share the post. We shall be publishing their poetry during the year.

In February, James became a father when Ottilie arrived and this poem captures the feelings of a new father.

Ottilie

By the time the clouds broke
Snow, like feathers
From the barn roof,
I felt you might come,
Waiting for the winter depths
To hold the ground still,
All about was white
And little flecks were passing
By the window
In their thousands
But you did not mind,
Now was a time for coming.
Little Ottilie, it took a while
For your arrival
But when the clouds had opened
You came down so fast
I thought the sky had cracked
And heaven come to earth
Nature's wildness written wide
Across the air
Sending ripples out across the waters.
But, after time, the falling stopped
And as I lay you on my chest
A stillness came
Turning your breaths to mine
And all about the bare trees
Rising from the snow
Reminding me of a world
That had gone before.

James Smith, Poet in Residence



Blackwell and Burcot WI

Our monthly meeting is held at 2pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Burcot village hall to hear a variety of speakers, covering topics ranging from stories told by a Zimbabwean grandmother to life as a local antiques dealer, from working as a television producer to Howard Drury's beautiful video, The Gardens of Ireland. At each meeting we have a competition based on the talk with an annual winner. Outside the meetings we have a monthly craft group, presently making a banner, a competitive skittles team, which has won all but one of its 2013 matches to date, and numerous trips to the theatre and places of interest such as Ludlow, Cheltenham and the Cotswolds. On 29th April we are organising a sponsored walk through Pinfields Wood (meeting at the Barnt Green Inn at 11am) in aid of the WI's overseas charity, Associated Women of the World (ACWW). Please contact Janet King on janet@kingfamily10.org.uk for a sponsorship form. The walk is open to men and women. There really is something for every woman at the WI so come and visit us – perhaps you will join our 60 local members.

Blackwell Concert Band

We have had a successful 2012 playing at more concerts being in demand more than ever before. These included concerts at various bandstands around the region, village fetes, the Remembrance Parade in Catshill and a wedding. We played for the first time at the Bromsgrove Beer Festival which was very popular – with players as well as the drinkers, and ventured outside our usual area, going up to Stafford, and Eccleshall. The weather affected a couple of concerts, notably Stratford Bandstand and Kenilworth Park, which was possibly the wettest concert we've ever done! Christmas is a busy time for the band playing, of course, at the turning on of the Christmas lights at Trinity Centre and at the Avoncroft Christmas event and local garden centres. Christmas Eve saw the annual visit to Blackwell Social Club. Our personal band highlight of the year was in November at the Adrian Boulton Hall, Birmingham, where we played with the Bands of West Mercia Police and West Midlands Fire Service, to commemorate the life of a fire service band player/police officer who died of breast cancer. We raised over £2,000 to be shared with Macmillan Cancer Support and Breakthrough Breast Cancer. It was a very special night. 2013 looks as busy a year – all concerts can be found at: www.blackwellconcertband.co.uk

The band welcomes beginners and experienced players, so please contact Vicky on stock.vicky@yahoo.co.uk or ring 0121 244 1662.



High House Wood Management Team

There aren't many large parts of the Lickeys still in private hands, but a field and wood abutting the Lickey Hills Country Park has that distinction.

Previously owned by a firm of estate agents with a view to development, the land has now passed on to the partners children. Around eight acres comprising of wood and an old meadow, this area was untouched until a management team (HHWMT) was established to help with its maintenance.

HHWMT consists of three interested and active parties – the owners, the Parish Council and a local residents association. Following consultation, a successful application to the Living Spaces scheme was achieved during 2005. As both High House Field and Lyn Wood, now collectively called High House Wood, had been designated a 'Landscape Protection Area', an 'Area of Great Landscape Value' and also 'Green Belt' by Worcestershire County Council, sympathetic work shortly commenced.

This five year programme initially included the opening the 'rides' on the meadow, cutting the holly hedge, removal of trees, thinning the canopy, and the erection of information posts. With felled and cut material stacked, an opening of overgrown areas and light now reaching the wood floor, this has served the mission well for encouraging wildlife, flora and fauna etc.

There are regular reviews of progress conducted by the management team and with the continued financial assistance of the Parish Council, annual work continues.

Ever mindful that we must do our utmost to protect our local amenities, and with an eye to the future, a recent initiative has produced a Tree Preservation Order on the entire site.

Hillfield Animal Sanctuary

Did you know that we have 300 animals being cared for in our village? We are located on Greenhill, Lyn Tudor rarely turns an animal away and actively rescues some from neglect. It costs an increasing amount of money to care for them all and the sanctuary relies largely on donations. You can sponsor an animal of your choice and have a certificate with photo plus opportunity to visit on Open Days for just £20pa or £10 six months.

Greenhill, Bromsgrove B60 1BL Tel: 0121 445 3828
www.hillfields-animal-sanctuary.com

Lickey Church

We are so lucky in Lickey and Blackwell to have two stunning churches. Churches that are very different architecturally and in worship styles. Of the three weekly Sunday services offered, Holy Trinity Lickey Church, (pictured opposite), has an 8 o'clock spoken worship which is quiet and reflective in style, offering a real sense of God's peace. St Catherine's Blackwell



offers a 9 o'clock traditional service offering a timeless act of worship. Then at 10.30 Holy Trinity, offers a contemporary family service, creative and celebrational in nature.

But we want to go further. We want to bring church to you where you are. With this in mind we have employed Rev. Paul Clarke as community minister. His task is to take the church out into the community. Symbols of the church were introduced to Santa's visit to the country park where carols were sung. Church has been in our local schools, we now visit Lickey Hills, Blackwell and Hunters Hill Schools on a regular basis. Church has visited Blackwell Scouts and Lickey Flower Club, Blackwell Social Club and many of our senior citizens homes.

Paul's most recent venture is to join the Parish Council, where he seeks to serve our community as a Councillor.

"Many of the residents I have met ask me how they can learn more about the Christian faith, if they don't go to church" says Paul. He answers "At Holy Trinity Lickey, we are starting an Alpha course on the 8th of April at 7.30. We start with a meal and a short talk to give you a chance to see if Alpha is for you. If it is, there follows a 6 week course which looks at aspects of Christian belief."

If you are interested in Alpha, or Paul's work please contact him at pastorclarke@gmail.com or leave a message for him to contact you on 0121 439 3423

Lickey Community Group

We were formed in 2000 by residents. Our aim is to take an active interest in what is happening in the community of Lickey & Marlbrook to help, improve and enhance our local area. Since then, we have developed many links with local bodies in order to help with our campaigns on the Marlbrook Tip, flooding, parking, local bus services, traffic, litter, refuse services and noise pollution.

Over the past year we have been trying to get a resolution to the problem of the Marlbrook Tip. We have maintained very close contact with the District Council and other related agencies and have continued to organise meetings of the Marlbrook Tip Focus Group.

There was flooding on the Old Birmingham Road over the Christmas and new year period. We helped tackle this significant problem by active involvement of our Committee liaising with the Council and other bodies.

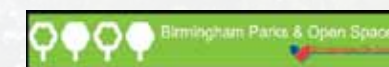
We were very pleased to be asked to send our representative to the meetings of the Lickey Hills Country Park Joint Consultative Committee. We are always looking for new members for our local friendly Group. Regular information is sent to members with news of local interest. We hold our AGM in April which gives everyone a great chance to meet their neighbours.

Full details of membership and an application can be found on our website: www.lickeycommunitygroup.btck.co.uk



Lickey Hills Country Park Rangers

The park attracts over 550,000 visitors annually making it the sixth most visited free tourist attraction in the Midland region and the second most visited venue in Worcestershire after the Malvern Hills.



We work to maintain and improve the biodiversity of the site, and for the enjoyment of the public. This includes: a major pool upgrade and refurbishment at the Rose and Crown; creating a photo record of habitat and species; a rolling programme of refurbishment of site fixtures e.g. steps, benches; clearance of birch scrub and encroaching bramble on heathland on Bilberry and Cofton Hills; and development of the wildlife pond and more tree planting in the community orchard.



The presence of *Phytophthora ramorum* on site has been a problem. Priority has been given to *Rhododendron* removal to limit spread, and we continue to work with FERA on containment and removal of this pathogen. And we have achieved Green Flag status for 13th consecutive year.

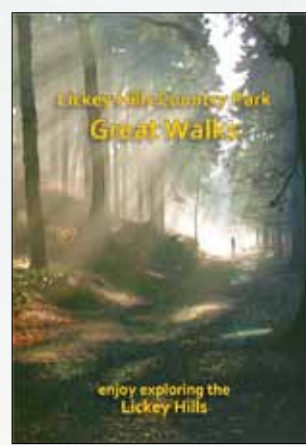
Some statistics...

- 11 School visits with Ranger (457 pupils); without a Ranger 22 (787 pupils)
- 19 community activities including walks and talks (387 attendees)
- 36 Ranger events (2,757 attendees)

We continue to develop our use of volunteers – see p5. Habitat Heroes, our volunteer group, meet every Tuesday. For details ring 0121 445 6036

Lickey Hills Geo-Champions

The Community Earth Heritage Champions Project was set up by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust funded by charitable grants. It aims to involve local communities in the understanding, conservation and utilisation of nineteen key geological sites across the counties, including the Lickey Hills.



THE LHS BOOKLET LAUNCH

Lickey Hills Society

The last 12 months was particularly busy for the Society. Meetings included: Bournville Village by Edwin Gumbley, and Andy Bucklitch on how the habitat for water voles is improving in Bromsgrove District. Brian Draper talked of the Middle Reaches of the river Severn, prior to a summer coach trip. We visited Cofton Nursery, admired the Chelsea Gold Medal winning displays and the wonderful variety of plants produced on the site for Birmingham City displays.

Practical activities in the Country Park included a heath and a Himalayan Balsam clearance, litter-picks, and planting fruit trees.



Consultations included the major enhancement work on the pools area of the Rose and Crown and the new franchisees' improvement plans for the golf course.

We have funded two camera nest-boxes and a monitor for the Visitor Centre and enabled an outside table tennis table installation near the adventure playground.

Much of our time has been spent on our new booklet 'Lickey Hills Country Park – Great Walks', launched at our November AGM and available from the Visitors Centre. This was funded by a legacy left to the Society by the late Mr John Murdock, and also way-markers for walks which we are currently installing plus planned information boards at entry points to the Hills. Website: www.lhs.org.uk

Lickey WI

Lickey WI meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30. During the last year we have laughed at Humour in Retirement, rocked to former Lickey School headmaster David Slater take on Buddy Holly, and Tony Breeden playing Christmas carols and songs on the keyboard. We have also had informative talks on the Titanic and also the Suffragettes. We have a monthly book club and are about to discuss Life of Pi, monthly walks during the lighter nights and skittles matches with other WI's. We also have outings to places like the Pen Museum in Birmingham and Boundary Mills for shopping. We are a friendly group and everyone is very welcome

Scouts

Scouting is alive and well in the Parish. The 1st Lickey and 1st Blackwell meet in the St Catherine's Road Scout hut, and offers Scouting for both boys and girls aged from 6 to 14. The popularity of Scouting, means we run at capacity yet with more leaders we can grow. Whatever your age come and join the adventure! Website: www.1stblackwell.org.uk



People of all ages and backgrounds are 'Champions' for their local site, doing conservation work, and promoting and monitoring it. The Project takes a holistic view of the environment, to understand the relationships between geology, ecology and archaeology.

This year we had public guided walks, hosted visits by other geologists and held an Open Day in June. We also started to clear Rose Hill Quarry so that the geology can be seen.

We can provide talks for groups, schools and societies, covering the history of the quarries, the formation and subsequent distortion of the rocks, quarrying in the 19th century, use of the quarries during WWII, and finally the work carried out by the Champions. A wide range of children's activities are also available.

Detailed information can be found in our booklet 'Lickey Hills – Barnt Green Road Quarry', available at the Visitor Centre for £3. Website: www.lickeychampions@gmail.com

Lickey Hills Local History Society



The Lickey Hills Local History Society was formed in 1972 to encourage study of the history of Cofton Hackett, Barnt Green, Rednal, Rubery and Lickey.

We have a season of monthly evening lectures from September to April meeting on the third Tuesday at the Trinity Centre. This season's programme included talks on the Dodderhill Project, Tardebigge, lost mansions of the Black Country, Bournville, Birmingham Workhouses, Railways round Redditch and a celebrity visit from Marie Lloyd at our Christmas Music Hall!

In September we held our first Lickey Hills History Open Day at the Old School Room, Warren Lane, with displays & guided walks. Members were there to answer questions and welcome memories and mementos from the public.

Over the summer there are occasional outings or walks. Last year we had a guided tour of Bishop Hurd's Library at Hartlebury Castle, built in 1782/3 and considered to be one of the most beautiful in the country.

We are currently researching local quarries, nail-makers, our tithe and enclosure maps, Chadwich Manor, Blackwell, local schools, our war memorials, and Lickey Church.

Our website: www.lhlhs.org.uk

Lickey and Blackwell Parish Councillors

Mrs Jill Harvey, chair Lickey Monument Ward	36 Rose Hill, Lickey B45 8RR	0121 453 5838	jh@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Mrs Kathryn Crockett, vice chair Lickey Grange Ward	344 Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES	0121 445 5965	kc@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Mr Paul Clarke Shepley Ward	C/o Trinity Centre, 411 Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES	0121 439 3423	pc@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Ms Jo Eales Linthurst Ward (h)	Pinfield House, Cherry Hill Road, Barnt Green B45 8LL	0121 445 5754	je@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Mr Nick Forknell Lickey Monument Ward	40 Pine Grove, Lickey B45 8HE	0121 439 9324	nf@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Mr Peter Harvey Lickey Grange Ward (f)	36 Rose Hill, Lickey B45 8RR	0121 453 5838	ph@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
Mrs Janet King Linthurst Ward (c)	110 Linthurst Newtown, Blackwell B60 1BS	0121 445 2802	jk@lickeyandblackwellpc.org

Vacant ~ Lickey Monument Ward details from EO, below

Vacant ~ Linthurst Ward details from EO, below

Mrs Helen Doherty Executive Officer	27 Blackwell Road, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8BT	0121 445 1849	eo@lickeyandblackwellpc.org
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PC Groups: [environment](#) • [finance](#) • [highways](#) • [planning](#) • [communications](#) • [social services](#) (group lead underlined)

for parish editorial matters contact the Executive Officer, above

Bromsgrove District Council

Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 1AA	01527 873 232	www.bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Cllr. Dr. Brian Cooper, 6 Lord Austin Drive, Marlbrook, Bromsgrove B60 1RB – Marlbrook Ward	07711 014 820	b.cooper@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Cllr. Mr Richard Deeming, 502 Groveley Lane, Cofton Hackett, B'ham B45 8UB – Hillside Ward	0121 445 3114	r.deeming@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Cllr. Mr Stuart Dudley, Old Wharf Cottage, Brockhill Lane, Tardebigge, B'grove B60 1SL – Hillside Ward	01527 867 860	s.dudley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Cllr. Mr John Ruck, The Cottage, Top Road, Wildmoor, Bromsgrove B61 0RB – Marlbrook Ward	0121 457 8026	j.ruck@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Cllr. Mr Kit Taylor, 22 Brickhouse Lane, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove B60 4LX – Linthurst Ward	01527 879 339	k.taylor@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Worcestershire County Council

County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP	01905 763 763	www.worcestershire.whub.org.uk
Cllr. Mrs Sheila Blagg, Nailers Cottage, 29 Whetty Ln, Rubery, B'ham B45 9DL – Woodvale Division	0121 460 1766	sblagg@worcestershires.gov.uk
Cllr. Mr Peter McDonald, 10 Waseley Road, Rubery, B'ham B45 9TP – Beacon Division	0121 453 9267	pmcdonald2@worcestershires.gov.uk
Cllr. Mrs Emma Moffett, Manor Hill, Swan Lane, Upton Warren, B'grove B61 9HE – Bromsgrove East Div.	01527 861 200	emoffett@worcestershires.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Mr Sajid Javid MP House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA	01527 872 135	sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk
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Community Contacts

Age UK, 51 Windsor Street, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 2BJ	01527 575 855	www.westmercia.police.uk
Artrix Arts Centre, School Drive, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 1AX	01527 577 330	www.artrix.co.uk
Blackwell First School, St. Catherines Road, Blackwell, Worcs B60 1BN	0121 445 1622	www.blackwellfirstschool.com
Bromsgrove Library, Stratford Road, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 1AP	01527 575 855	www.acbromsgrove.org.uk
Citizens' Advice Bureau, 50 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove, Worcs B61 0DD	01527 831 480	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
Lickey Hills Primary School, Old Birmingham Road, Lickey, Birmingham B45 8EU	0121 445 1992	www.lickeyhillsprimary.ik.gov
Neighbourhood Watch – Adrian Simons	01527 586 253	www.westmercia.police.uk
Parish Footpaths Warden – David Crockett		public footpath issues – contact Executive Officer
Parish Tree Warden – Mrs Topsy Hughes	0121 445 4944	topsyanna@live.co.uk
Police, Blackwell – Bromsgrove Police Station, 17 The Crescent B60 2DF	101	www.westmercia.police.uk
Police, Lickey – Rubery Police, Station 164 New Road B45 9JA		
Rural Rides, 9 Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove, Worcs B61 7JJ	01527 879 290	www.wrvs.org.uk
Trinity Centre, 411 Old Birmingham Road, Lickey B45 8ES	0121 445 1425	www.lickeychurch.com

noticeboard



MOBILE LIBRARY 2013

STOPS AT ORCHARD CROFT, BARNT GREEN
AND REDNAL SOCIAL CLUB, COFTON HACKETT

TUESDAY 1.55 - 2.20PM

9 & 30 APR, 21 MAY, 11 JUNE, 2 & 23 JULY, 13 AUG,
3 & 24 SEPT, 15 OCT, 5 & 26 NOV & 17 DEC

BLACKWELL AND BURCOT WI

We meet at 2pm on the second Wednesday at Burcot Village Hall with an interesting programme of talks, visits, craft and sports

April 10 meeting at FRESH Garden Centre, Burcot. Speaker: Nicki Gow with gardening tips.

April 29 Sponsored Walk in Pinfields Wood in aid of ACWW. Meet at Barnt Green Inn 11am for 1 hour walk. Sponsorship forms from Janet King 0121 445 2802.

May 8 AGM with speaker Tony Hale. Rae Fowler 01527 874 412

BLACKWELL CONCERT BAND

April 14 Charity event, 2-4pm Little Heath Garden Centre, Lickey End Bromsgrove, B60 1HY. Check out full concert schedule on facebook. Vicky Stock 0121 244 1662 or vicky@yahoo.co.uk

BLACKWELL FIRST SCHOOL

March 29 - April 14 School Easter holidays
April 15 TED day

BLACKWELL SCOUT GROUP (4TH BROMSGROVE)

Blackwell and Lickey Scout groups meet at the Hut, St Catherine's Rd., Blackwell. Scout troops are open to boys and girls of all interests and abilities.

- Beaver Scout Colony 6 – 8 years Thurs 6-7pm.
- Cub Scouts Pack 8 – 10½ years Weds 6.45-8.15pm
- Scouts Troop 10½ – 14 years Thurs 7.15-9pm
www.4thbromsgrove.org.uk/
- 1st Lickey Scout Group runs three sections on Tues.
info@1stLickey.org.uk with details on their website.

BLACKWELL SOCIAL CLUB

Events programme from the club. 445 2134.

BRITAIN VS CANCER

April Jordan Desert trek
Cllr Jo Eales and a group of determined local ladies will be undertaking this extreme challenge trekking from the Dead Sea to Petra.
Please support Jo at: www.justgiving.com/Jo-Eales

BROMSGROVE AND DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION

April 11-14 Visit to Gronau, NW Germany
May 8-11 Visitors from St Sauveur-Lendelin, Normandy
May 10 AGM 7.30pm Bromsgrove Council House, Burcot Lane.
Judith Stephenson 445 2918

KEEP FIT (50+YRS)

Monday eves at Methodist Church Hall, Greenhill.
Ann Gwynne.

FRIDAY BRIDGE CLUB

7pm each Friday at Burcot Village Hall. Friendly competition, beginners and visitors welcome.
Jan Elsworth 01527 857796

HABITAT HEROES

Meet every Tuesday 10-2pm, Lickey Hills Visitor Centre. Join the conservation volunteer team. All tools and training provided. Booking essential on 445 6036

LIBRARY SERVICE

Rubery Library open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Friday.
Reading club email: ruberylib@worcestershire.gov.uk
01905 822722

LICKEY & BLACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Monthly meetings open to all residents with a consultation period before meeting starts and a chance to speak during the meeting. All councillors are here to help with local issues between meetings.

LICKEY CHURCH WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP

The Trinity Centre, Lickey 1st and 3rd Wednesday 2.15-3.45pm. Speakers, craft activities, quizzes, charity events for Missions to Seafarers.
Sandra Smith 445 1425

LICKEY COMMUNITY GROUP

April 22 AGM, Trinity Centre 7.30pm
Local residents keen to improve the community and area in Lickey & Marlbrook with the future of Marlbrook Tip of particular concern.
Mike Adams: mwadams@pipex.com

LICKEY HILLS ART SOCIETY

Longbridge Methodist Hall, Bristol Road, Rednal, B45 9TY (nr. Kidderminster Carpets). First Saturday each month at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome.
Graham Wilson 463 7097 or enquiries@lickeyhillsartsociety.co.uk

LICKEY HILLS COUNTRY PARK

March 22 'Skywatch'. 7.30pm Explore the night sky with telescopes of the Birmingham Astronomical Society. Slide shows, meet society members and the Star Dome for indoor star gazing.
Planetarium tickets limited and only on sale at 7.30pm prompt at the Visitor Centre.
Meet at Visitor Centre, Warren Ln, Lickey, B45 8ER
March 30 'Geo-Champions Guided Walk', 1½ miles and travelling back 488 million years!
Free, but please book 0121 445 6036.
Meet at the 11am Visitors Centre.
April 5 'Mini Beast Safari'. Discover smaller residents of the Lickey Hills and build a bug house to take home.
Family event, booking essential 0121 447 7106
Meet at 11am Visitor Centre.

LICKEY HILLS GEO-CHAMPIONS

Guided walks on the geology Champions Trail – see above.

LICKEY HILLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Trinity Centre, Lickey on 2nd Tuesday at 7.45pm. Visitors £2.50.
April 16 'Industry in East Worcestershire before the coming of the Railway Age', by Dr Richard Churchley.
May/June Summer outing tbc.
George Gascoyne 453 6320

LICKEY HILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

March 22 PTA Race Evening
March 28 Democracy Dinner
March 28 - April 15 Easter holidays
April tbc Uniform Sale
Old Birmingham Rd, Lickey B45 8EU 0121 445 1992

LICKEY HILLS SOCIETY

Meet at Trinity Centre, Lickey at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome.
April 20 'Spring Litter Pick', all equipment provided. Meet at 10am Lickey Hills Visitor Centre, Warren Ln.
April 29 'Protecting the Heritage' by Mary Worsfold, Conservation Officer, Bromsgrove District Council.
June 8 & July 6 'Himalayan Balsam Clearance', meet 10am at Visitor Centre, Warren Lane.
Baden Carlson, Secretary info@lhs.org.uk

LICKEY WI

Meet at Trinity Centre, Lickey at 7.30pm on the first Tuesday plus theatre/cinema visits, skittles and bowling matches.
www.lickeywi.moonfruit.com

LICKEY WINE CIRCLE

Cofton Hackett Village Hall 8pm last Thursday. Talks, quizzes, games, themed evenings all about making your own wine.
Sheila 445 5436

MIXED AEROBICS AND FITNESS

Every Wednesday at 7pm at Blackwell Methodist Hall. Just £3.50pp. The fun way to keep fit.
Richard Daley, 07957 419389

ROSEHILL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY

Trinity Centre, Lickey 2pm second Monday. Demonstrations and refreshments – visitors welcome.
April 8 'Seeds of Creation' with Bob Harris.
Belinda Winroope 447 7477 for programme.

ST CATHERINE'S, BLACKWELL WI

The Wheel, St Catherine's, Blackwell at 7.30pm third Thursday. Varied programme of talks, craft projects and visits.
April 18 'My Gambian School Project' by Shelagh O'Coucher
May 16 AGM and Resolutions plus art demonstration with Eric Watson.
June 20 Visit to Madagascar with Phred Newbury.
stcatherineswi@aol.co.uk

TABLE TENNIS AT BLACKWELL

Thursday evening 7.30pm at Blackwell Methodist Hall. Three tables & all equipment supplied – just turn up. £1 all ages and abilities are welcome.
Janet King janet@kingfamily110.org.uk

We are always pleased to include your local events. Contact eo@lickeyandblackwellpc.org

Further information on parish activities can be found on our websites and whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the Parish Council and its councillors disclaim all liability for damages arising from information supplied and recommend checking with the relevant group.
Your PC newsletter contains material sourced from responsibly managed and sustainable commercial forests. 'FSC' is made from totally recyclable, biodegradable and acid-free material – please recycle or pass it on.

