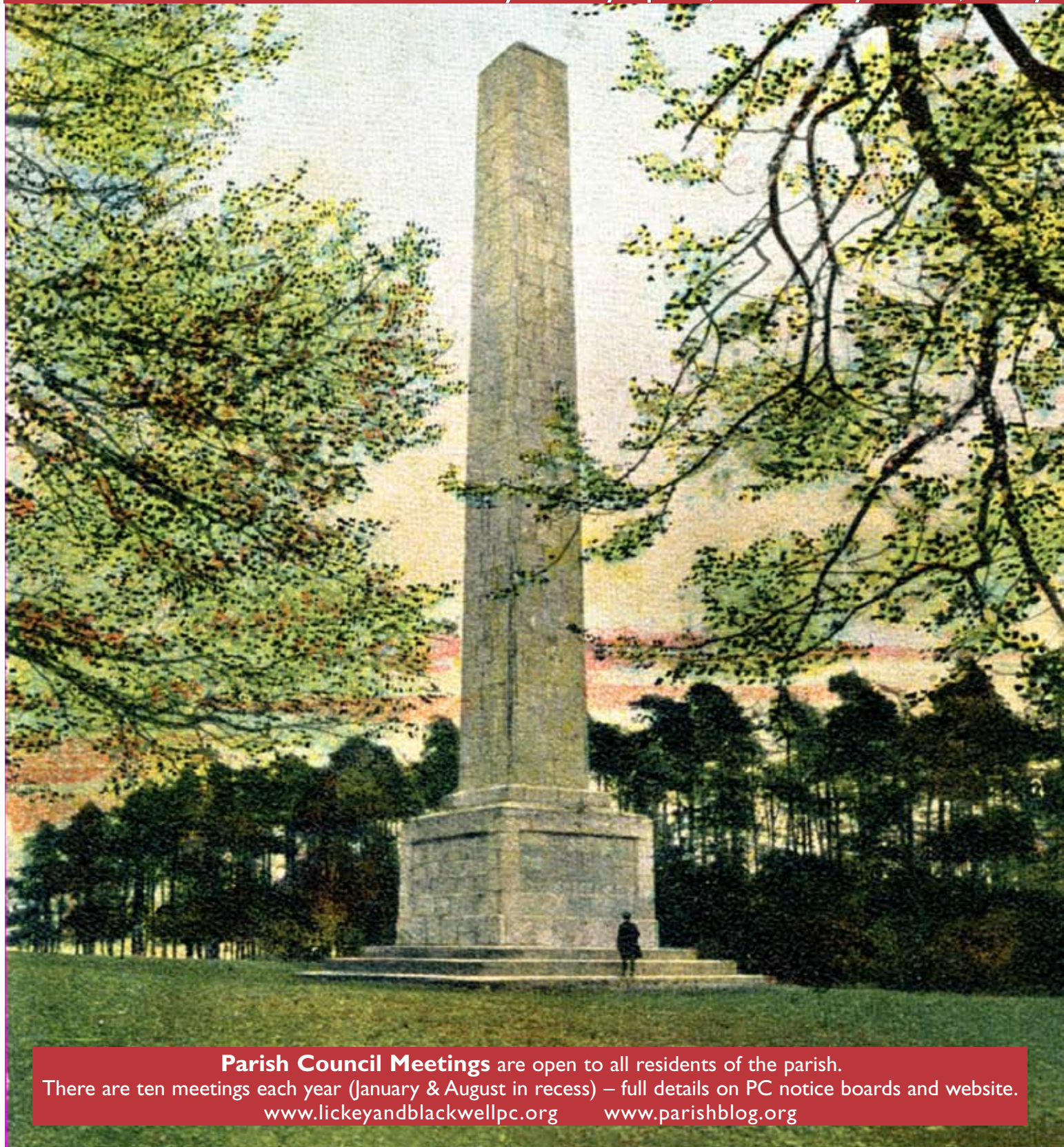


Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council Annual Report



Presented to the *Annual Parish Assembly* Monday April 6, 2009 Trinity Centre, Lickey



Parish Council Meetings are open to all residents of the parish.
There are ten meetings each year (January & August in recess) – full details on PC notice boards and website.
www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org www.parishblog.org

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held Monday 7th April 2008 at Blackwell
 2. Chairman's address
 3. Financial report – Judith Casey, finance officer
 4. Environment report – Cllr. Janet King
 5. Highways report – Cllr. John Williams
 6. Planning report – Cllr. Jill Harvey
 7. Residents' Meeting report – Cllr. Keith Woolford
 8. Publicity report – Cllr. Jackie Johnson
 9. Tree Warden report – Mrs Coral Beavis
 10. Lengthsman report – Mr Ron Rand
 11. Social Services report – Cllr. Kathryn Crockett
 12. Footpaths Warden – David Crockett
 13. Speakers from local organisations
 14. Public Question Time
-

WEATHER STATION,
ROSE HILL



BLACKWELL FIRST SCHOOL
SUMMER FETE JUNE 2008



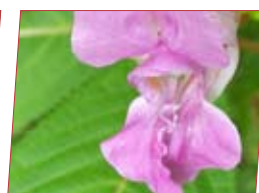
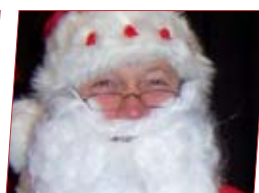
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD AT THE LICKEY PARISH HALL, AT 7.30PM MONDAY 7TH APRIL 2008

Present: Councillor M Andrews (Chairman), Councillors Crockett, Harvey, Johnson, King, Stanhope, Williams and Woolford, District Councillors Deeming, Doyle and Taylor, and nine members of the public.

Apologies: Councillor Mrs J Jones, Mr R Brown.

- 1 Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on Tuesday, 3rd April 2007 were taken as read & signed.
- 2 Chairman's report by Councillor M Andrews
- 3 Finance report by Finance Officer, Mrs J Casey
- 4 Planning report by Councillor Mrs J Harvey
- 5 Highways report by Councillor J Williams
- 6 Social Services report by Councillor Mrs K Crockett
(Mr A Venebles raised the question of affordable housing in the Parish but no plans were being made for this at present.)
- 7 Environment report by Councillor Mrs J King
- 8 Longbridge Development progress by Councillor R Deeming
Current proposals were for 200 older persons' houses on the east of the development and 165 houses to the west, all of which would receive nominees from Bromsgrove District Council's housing register. Supporting infrastructure such as library, shops, medical centre, etc. St Modwin's could acquire the Focus site. There would be park and ride facilities for 980 cars by the station.
It was agreed that the Parish Council would write a letter to County Council expressing concerns about the lack of improved access roads for the development and this should be taken into account when the plans were being finalized.
Work should start on the Cofton site in about twelve months.
- 9 Other speakers and Public Questiontime
 - 9.1 Councillor Taylor explained that the District Council had the powers to reduce the Council Tax for The Glen residents and this would result in zero tax for some. The matter would be coming before the District Council on 23rd April 2008. Councillor Taylor thanked the Bromsgrove Standard for the article in the paper a few weeks ago which had helped to assuage some of the residents' worries and asked that he be notified of any movements of mobile homes or caravans into the site.
Councillor Taylor also explained that a task group was being developed by the District Council to provide alcohol free zones in the villages of Bromsgrove.
Councillor Taylor was thanked for his efforts to help the residents of The Glen.
 - 9.2 Councillor Mrs Doyle thanked the Chairman for his professionalism during the past twelve months of his chairmanship. She also thanked the Parish Councillors for their hard work and, in particular, those who had worked on the production of the Parish Plan.
The Parish Assembly closed at 8.10 pm.

**Michael Andrews
Chairman**



foreword



Ladies and Gentlemen

As I have decided to retire from the Council before its next regular meeting I am recording some of my thoughts on past developments, progress during the year under review and agreed aspirations for the future.

I have served on the Council since its inception in 1993 and have always tried to ensure that its policies and procedures have conformed with reasonable commercial standards having regard for size and limited resources. Building on the foundations laid by my predecessor Chairmen, the operating structure with Group responsibilities for key functions and the establishment of a Planning Committee has ensured that tasks have been shared and that good progress has again been sustained. Over the past two years it has been possible to introduce a rolling programme for strategic planning whereby agreed objectives can be settled and these in turn inform the budgetary process undertaken during each autumn.

The Council is keen to preserve and where possible enhance the aesthetic appeal of this area. In the coming year it is envisaged that attention will focus on the provision of facilities for all age groups, hedging, planted areas and gateways into the parish. Also, the position concerning possible requirements for a parish office will be kept under review. In addition to links with other organizations concerned in sustaining the welfare of residents, a quarterly Newsletter, website and blog, the Council has initiated a series of Residents Consultation Meetings held at different venues throughout the Parish on a variety of topics. Being held on a Saturday morning these give many more people an opportunity for access to Councillors and subject specialists on matters of concern which can be taken into account when bringing forward ideas and formulating policy.

During October 2008 Mr Roger Hollingworth, Group Leader, Bromsgrove District Council addressed the Parish Council on prospective Neighbourhood Partnership and what he foresaw as the shape of things to come within local government. In my opinion it is clear that recession will force the pace of change and reinforce requirements for closer co-operation and development at all levels in local government. At the December Meeting Dr George Lord, Leader of Worcestershire County Council along



with a representative from the Highways Department addressed the Parish Council when much of the ensuing discussion centred on the County's resources and measures being taken to address the state of our highways. Success does depend upon being open to information and new ideas from whatever quarter they may spring. Efforts are made to sustain good relations with the local press who assist in providing a conduit for communications between the Council and parishioners.

I am confident that my successor will find the Council in good order and introduce many new ideas. Though I now live just outside the parish I will continue to provide whatever assistance may be required. It only remains for me to thank fellow Councillors for the privilege of allowing me to serve as their Chairman and for the support I have received. Also, I acknowledge and thank the Executive Officer whose endeavours on our behalf together with her knowledge of Council procedures and background matters have been invaluable.

*Michael Andrews
Chairman
6 April 2009*



finance



Below is a copy of the Receipts and Payments Account for 2007/08.

The Precept for 2007/08 was £40,000, £20,000 of which was paid into the Parish Council's Bank Account at the end of March 2007 (instead of at the beginning of April 2007) so the figures given on the Summary of Receipts and Payments are misleading.

The Precept for 2006/07 was £33,000 and the for 2007/08 was £40,000. Some extra funding was needed because of the extra financial liability of the new Play Area at Blackwell which opened in March 2008.

Other major spending was on the upgrading of Greenfield Bank, off Greenfield Avenue, Marlbrook. This piece of neglected land has now been properly planted and maintained by Monument Garden Services for the Parish Council.

The small grassed area on the corner of Lickey Square and Old Birmingham Road has also been upgraded and the Parish Council's landscape gardener,

Mr Ron Smith carries out a programme of seasonal planting and maintenance throughout the year.

Singleton's Nurseries from Lydiate Ash has planted some trees for the Parish Council along Old Birmingham Road and Linthurst Road (by Elephant Alley) and have kindly replaced some of these trees which either failed or were damaged.

The Parish Council has continued to support the mowing of the cemetery extension, and this has, so far, been refunded by the District Council.

The lengthsman has continued to carry out his duties which have made a tremendous difference to the minor maintenance of the roads and footways in the Parish. All of this money was refunded by the County Council for the year 2007/08.

Other spending has been on the Best Kept Garden Competition which Councillor Janet King has again organised with help from the other Councillors.

Finally, the Parish Council has been able to support grants to Blackwell School and Lickey School towards library projects.

Judith Casey
Finance Officer

Suggested explanations of significant variances

Receipts

1. *Precept*: Bromsgrove District Council transferred half year precept for 2007/08 into the Parish bank account before the end of year 2006/07. The amount of the precept in this current financial year is half of the annual precept.
2. *VAT*: refunds have decreased due to expenditure decreasing.
3. *Other income*: Other income reduced due to the PC being reimbursed by the County Council for its share towards works a project during 2006/07 and not 2007/08 (Elephant Alley).

Payments

1. *Play areas and open spaces*: decreased expenditure due to projects undertaken during previous financial year had been completed.
2. *Other*: there were only small increases under other subheadings in payments in line with the increase in cost of living.

LICKEY AND BLACKWELL PARISH COUNCIL Summary Receipts and Payments Account 2007/2008

2006/2007 £	RECEIPTS	2007/2008 £
53,000	Precept	20,000
4,229	Cemetery, recreation grounds and litter picking	2,660
607	Interest received	1,271
1,178	VAT Refunds	1,060
1,422	Lengthsman	2,317
2,828	Other income	340
63,264	TOTAL	27,648
	PAYMENTS	
5,471	General administration	7,733
12,084	Salaries & staff expenses	13,411
13,080	Play areas and open spaces	9,107
1,575	Donations and grants	1,700
2,462	Highways/litter picking	3,448
2,520	Cemetery maintenance	2,403
3,424	Newsletter	2,516
1,140	VAT paid	1,062
41,756	TOTAL	41,380
21,508	Surplus/(Deficit)	(13,732)

The above statements represent fairly the financial position of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2008

Approved by the council on 20th July 2008

Signed

Mr. J. Anderson
Chairman of Council

Judith Casey
Responsible Finance Officer



environment



This has been an innovative year for the Environment Group, which has succeeded in finding groups of residents to help us in our various projects.

Mapping our Parish

After a slow start good progress has been made with our bio-diversity project. With help from the Worcestershire Bio-diversity Partnership and the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre the project

was launched at a Residents' Meeting attended by Julie Kirkbride MP. Enthusiastic volunteers including scouts, guides, the church, our primary schools, Youth Blackwell and a number of residents are now engaged in recording their chosen area, whether a field, wood or even the churchyard. Some of our areas have been earmarked as of particular scientific interest by WCC and others are simply of local note.

Emerging from this mapping project have come two new studies relating to the historic environment. A farm building recording project and a ridge and furrow survey have started with help from the Historic Environment and Archaeological Service from the County Council, looking at the past and present of our parish's farmland and buildings. It is not too late to volunteer; please contact Councillor Jill Harvey.

Flooding Problems

There have been some instances of flooding in the parish and the Parish Council is working with Bromsgrove District Council to mitigate these. Gullies and drains

are kept clear by our own lengthsman and the County has an annual cleaning programme.

Members of the Environment Group are more than happy to discuss any issues or problems which residents may have. The newsletter and blog provide useful channels for passing on advice and suggestions.



Bulb Planting

Once again we have to thank the Unpaid Work Scheme workers for planting daffodils in the verges by the churchyard on Twatling Road.

Best Front Garden Competition

We enjoyed visiting every front garden in the parish and found some very worthy winners. Thanks must go to the judges, who gave their time and enthusiasm, and to all those gardeners who contribute to making our parish such a pleasant place in which to live.

In 2009 we shall be introducing a new category, 'The Most Eco-friendly Front Garden', which we hope will recognise the efforts of residents who provide habitats for wildlife and green spaces to avoid flooding.

It's a Dogs Life

Dog fouling remains a problem in some parts of the parish and has been highlighted in the newsletter and local newspaper. The parish council wishes to thank that majority of residents who thoughtfully take their pets' little offerings home or to the bins provided.

Footpaths

Your PC continues to work with WCC to maintain our footpaths and this year saw Rainbow Walk, leading from the bottom end of Greenhill to Spirehouse Lane, improved and officially named in the presence of members of the Rainbow family who have previously farmed the land adjacent to the path ~ *see back page*.

Later in the year former Parish Council Chairman, Ron Brown, consented to a footpath between Monument Road and Beacon Lane being named after him – *Brown's Way*. Footpaths Warden, David Crockett, organised a well supported parish walk in autumn 2008 and a Bluebell Wood Walk is planned for 17th May.

High House Wood

The Parish Council continues to be represented on the management committee for High House Wood and improvements are still being made.

Janet King



JILL HARVEY AND JANET KING WITH
ABOVE: CLARE STALLARD AT HAGLEY
BELOW: FRANCIS FLANNAGAN & ROSE PARKER



highways



The Highways Group is committed to improving the quality and safety of the roads in our Parish. During the last 12 months we have:

- Pushed ahead using the commitment from the parish council to our strategic goals for the life of this council
- Continued to lobby those tiers of local government responsible for delivery
- Actively engaged with the PACT system
- Monitored and chased progress on maintenance issues, whilst encouraging our residents to self-report maintenance issues in order to establish a louder voice for the parish during times of limited public spending.

The Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council Highways Strategic Goals to 2011 are:

1. Deal with Speeding Hotspots – both Lickey and Blackwell Schools – working with outside agencies – WCC, BDC, school governing bodies, police, PACT – as per stated council policy.
2. Hold WCC to account, in order to ensure that they deliver the quality and safety of the roads that our parish expects.
3. Prepare for and respond to any impact from the Longbridge Development.

It is a stated policy of the Parish Council to work with the relevant organisations and authorities in order to seek a reduction in the traffic speed problems near Lickey Hills Primary School, Old Birmingham Road, and outside Blackwell First School on St. Catherine's Road.



MIKE WALTON OF HIGHWAYS WCC WITH JUDITH CASEY AND JOHN WILLIAMS

We are delighted to report that County Councillor Peter McDonald did follow through with his support for us by allocating some of his discretionary funds to the provision of flashing speed sign installed in the summer of 2008 on Old Birmingham Road (above the school crossing). We are also pleased to report that a further two have been installed on Twatling Road.

Through our lobbying and persistence, we are delighted to report that an extra safety railing has been installed at the school crossing on Old Birmingham Road which we trust will increase safety and reduce thoughtless parking on the footways. In response to residents safety concerns at school drop-off times, we have facilitated the introduction of double yellow lines near to the entrances of Malvern Road and High House Drive.

We have also recently significantly improved the safety of the entrance to the play area in Blackwell by having a telegraph pole moved in order to improve visibility. Worcestershire County Council have also provided a more visible crossing.

PACT (Partners And Community Together)

With organisations including the District and County Councils and West Mercia police committed to support PACT, we continued to support the local PACT initiative in order to see our local issues addressed. Cllr. Williams represents our council on the Lickey & Barnt Green PACT panel. We are seeking clarification on the shift in emphasis for PACT in Blackwell, which has resulted from 100% non-attendance of the county councillor representing Blackwell.

Maintenance

We have dealt with over 80 issues on behalf of residents this last year, the majority of which have been satisfactorily resolved. The biggest wins this year are in relation to a significant clearance of potholes and worn out road surfaces in Blackwell.

John Williams

**LEFT:
CLLRS. JOHN WILLIAMS
AND PETER MCDONALD
WITH LOCAL RESIDENT
LEN COTTAM**





The development of the Public Access website by Bromsgrove District Council, which enables residents to view and comment on planning applications, has been warmly welcomed by the PC Planning Committee.

It enables us to further open up the planning process within the parish. BDC sends us a weekly email list of applications with all PC Councillors being appraised of the planning application within their own ward and throughout the parish before each meeting. This allows a more comprehensive involvement as viewing the plans can now be done at a more convenient time. Any comments or information are then fed into our decision-making process.

In the future we intend to put this information on the Parish Blog (website) to help residents find out about proposed development in the parish and make their own comments directly to BDC.

From 1st October 2008, new regulations for planning came into force. These have increased the type of small scale property extensions that no longer require planning permission, though they still need approval under the Building Regulations.

ABOVE:
**THE OLD SCHOOL,
LICKEY**
BELOW:
**THE TRINITY CENTRE
(LICKEY PARISH HALL)**



For the first time rules to control paving have been introduced. Planning permission is now required to lay traditional impermeable driveways exceeding 5 square metres. These rules also apply to the replacement of existing hard surfaces. We recommend that residents thinking of such developments ask for advice from Planning and Environment Services, at Bromsgrove District Council.

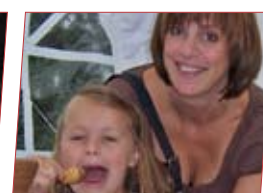
This year we have handled over 50 applications, about 20% down on the number for last year. The majority of these have been from residents improving their homes, with a small number of applications from the schools and local businesses in our parish. The reduction is probably a result of the economic downturn and the scarcity of credit.

We welcome the Government's recent approval of plans for the future development at the Longbridge Rover site, though present conditions may delay its implementation. Whilst not in our parish, we anticipate that it will provide local services, improved transport links and much needed local affordable housing.

Jill Harvey

2007/08 applications outstanding since last report

APP NO.	ADDRESS	PROPOSED WORKS	PC COMMENT	DECISION
B2007/1214	61 Monument Lane	Ground floor bedroom & shower	No objection	Granted
B2008/0048	98 Linthurst Newtown	2 storey side extension	Objection	Granted
B2008/0060	14 Wentworth Drive	First floor side extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0061	1 Station House	Garage/workshop alterations	No objection	Granted
B2008/0066	7 Dale Hill	2 storey side extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0096	10 Monument Lane	2 storey side extension	Objection	Granted
B2008/0097	22 Linthurst Newtown	Rear and side extension	Objection	Granted
B2008/0110	2 Blakesfield Drive	2 storey split level extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0122	2 Billy Lane	2 storey side extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0127	Adj. 220 Old B'ham Rd	Conversion to holiday lets	Objection	Granted
B2008/0138	3 Ashley Court	Conservatory & minor alterations	No objection	Granted



2008/09 applications

NO.	ADDRESS	PROPOSED WORKS	PC COMMENT	DECISION
B2008/0093	198 Old Birmingham Road	Conservatory at rear	No objection	Granted
B2008/0176	6 Station Road, Blackwell	3 velux garage windows	No objection	Granted
B2008/0217	5 Linthurst Newtown	1 & 2 storey extensions and garage	Objection	Granted
B2008/0240	10 Plymouth Road	Amendments to B2007/0977	Objection	Granted
B2008/0251	43 Pine Grove, Lickey	Single storey side and rear extensions	No objection	Granted
B2008/0266	7 Foxes Close, Blackwell	Single and 2 storey side extensions	No objection	Refused
B2008/0290	9 High House Drive, Lickey	1st floor extensions	No objection	Refused
B2008/0300	85 Linthurst Newtown	Rear conservatory	No objection	Granted
B2008/0306	21 Dale Hill, Blackwell	Replace flat roof dormer with 2 pitched	No objection	Granted
B2008/0324	210 Old Birmingham Road	Amendments to B06/050	No objection	Granted
B2008/0355	305 Old Birmingham Road	Amendment to B2007/0924	Objection	Granted
B2008/0361	41 Ashgrove Close	Single storey extension	Objection	Granted
B2008/0380	5 Cornmill Gardens	2 storey side extension & conservatory	No objection	Granted
B2008/0391	312 Old Birmingham Road	Single storey side and rear extension.	No objection	Granted
B2008/0415	21 Dale Hill, Blackwell	New entrance and bedroom	No objection	Granted
B2008/0433	3 Ingeva Drive, Lickey	Single storey garage	No objection	Granted
B2008/0453	7 Dale Hill, Blackwell	1st storey side extension. New access	No objection	Withdrawn
B2008/0455	9 Lickey Rock, Marlbrook	2 storey and single storey extensions	Objection	Granted
B2008/0466	4 Gleneagles Drive	2 storey side extension	Objection	Granted
B2008/0478	33 Linthurst Newtown	Retrospective change flat to pitched roof	No objection	Granted
B2008/0480	21 Mearse Lane	Single storey conservatory	Objection	Granted
B2008/0490	Rose Cottage, 14 Greenhill	2 storey side extension (see B2007/0282)	Objection	Granted
B2008/0510	1 The Avenue, Blackwell	New entrance and windows	No objection	Granted
B2008/0511	47A Twatling Road, Lickey	Front kitchen extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0528	38 Mearse Lane, Lickey	1 storey rear & 2 storey side extensions	No objection	Granted
B2008/0537	19 Mearse Lane	Triple detached garage	Objection	Refused
B2008/0566	Field by 53 Brookhouse Rd	Stables & feed/tack room, concrete base	No objection	Refused
B2008/0572	7 Foxes Close, Blackwell	2 storey & single storey side extensions	No objection	Granted
B2008/0588	2A Shepley Road, Lickey	Fore/rear extensions replacement garage	Objection	Refused
B2008/0614	29A Twatling Road, Lickey	Conservatory at rear	No objection	Granted
B2008/0628	7 Dale Hill, Blackwell	1st storey extension to side. New access	No objection	Granted
B2008/0660	6 St Catherine's Road	2 storey side/rear ext. Dormer windows	No objection	Granted
B2008/0766	136 Linthurst Newtown	Replace semi with 4 bed detached house	Objection	Refused
B2008/0770	Billys Cottage, Twatling Rd	Internal partition & steps re-sited for safety	No objection	Granted
B2008/0776	22 Ashgrove Close	Extension over garage	No objection	Granted
B2008/0782	1 Spirehouse Lane	Replace existing flat roof with pitched roof	No objection	Granted
B2008/0797	2A Shepley Road	Front and rear extensions	Objection	Granted
B2008/0798	2A Shepley Road	Replace outbuildings with detached garage	No objection	Refused
B2008/0861	100 Linthurst Newtown	2 storey side extension & remove porches	Objection	Granted
B2008/0882	40 Mearse Lane	1st floor rear & 1 storey side extensions	No objection	Granted
B2008/0885	17 Plymouth Road	Single storey side extension	No objection.	Granted
B2008/0893	389 Old Birmingham Road	1st floor ext. & alter ground floor & roof	No objection	Granted
B2008/0894	Land at 6 Blakes Field Drive	New detached five bedroom dwelling	Objection	Refused
B2008/0936	28 Linthurst Newtown	Two storey side and rear extension	No objection	Granted
B2008/0967	Old Rose & Crown	Entrance canopy. Alter windows & doors	No objection	Granted
B2008/0985	45 Twatling Road, Lickey	Ground floor and first floor extensions	No objection	Refused
B2008/0991	Holy Trinity Methodist Church	Light industrial to live/work, listed Building	No objection	Refused
B2008/1022	19 Mearse Lane, Lickey	New detached garage block	Objection	Pending
B2008/1056	Hillscourt Education Centre	Entrance canopy, store & disabled access	No objection	Granted
B2008/1069	Hunters Hill School	28mx17mx3m high multi use games area	No objection	Refused
B2008/1083	28 Station Road, Blackwell	4 bedroom house, renew of B/2005/1212	No objection	Granted
B2009/0006	9 Linthurst Rd, Blackwell	Rear balcony and front boundary wall	No objection	Granted
B2009/0016	79 Twatling Road, Lickey	Side/rear single & first floor extensions	No objection	Granted
B2009/0017	Blackwell First School	Staff room extension & covered play area	No objection	Granted
B2009/0021	19 Laurel Bank Mews	Replace timber conservatory with PVCu	No objection	Granted
B2009/0026	23 Ashgrove Close	Replace rear conservatory with family room	No objection	Pending
B2009/0086	14 Station Road, Blackwell	Extension to entrance hall and porch	No objection	Pending
B2009/0101	136 Linthurst Newtown	2 storey side and rear extension	No objection	Pending



residents' meetings

The buzz-word of the moment seems to be 'engage' and that's just what the Parish Council have been doing during the last 12 months.

Following the results of the Parish Plan, residents asked for the opportunity to become more involved in local issues. With the instigation of our Residents' Meetings that is exactly what we have done!

Safety and Security – July '08

Our first *RM* was held at Blackwell First School when the issues of personal safety and security were discussed. (Joint *PC Highways Group* and *Social Services Group*).

Special guest, Emma Gardiner, representing *Youth Blackwell*, made a compelling case that all young people should not be tarred with the same brush.

Presentations given by our invited panel members included Chief Inspector Tony Love, West Mercia Police and Mel Clark, NHW offering positive information on the new initiative of 'Smartwater'. Graham Rocke, Bromsgrove Community Partnership gave a more reassuring picture of how crime is perceived with Keith Sherman offering support for the more mature resident. Other contributions came from Jayne Willetts, Local Police Office, Kirsten Bowkett, CSO, Lesley Penfold, School Governor and PC Councillors.

Mapping our Parish – October '08

This was the culmination of a great deal of research by the *PC Environment Group*, and is the most far-reaching of all PC initiatives so far undertaken.

The initial overview was to attract resident volunteers to adopt and record an area for 12 months and, with all the data of what was found, contribute to our knowledge of the parish.

That was the theory. What has happened is that as we learnt more and gathered partners, we realised that we knew less! This was a spur and additional surveys are now in progress.

One thing that has been evident, is that there are many people and organisations eager to lend a hand and share in this valuable information. One such individual is Rose Parker the Habitat Mapping Officer at WCC.

The meeting, at Lickey Parish Hall (Trinity Centre), was officially opened by Julie Kirkbride MP, who has active interests in the environment. Presentations were made by George Gascoyne of Lickey Hill Local History Society, Becky Lashley, Ancient Tree Project Officer



and Pat Orwin, Botanist with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

We also had the opportunity to hear first hand from Clare Stallard on how her Hanbury Project, similar to our own, was progressing.

Following a short walk to High House Wood when Rose gave further information on the project, we were back at the hall when resident poet, Spoz, entertained us recalling his childhood on The Lickeys. He read his latest poem, specially written for the occasion, and then presented Michael Booth, our competition winner, with his prize.

There are now regular *MoP* meetings around the parish which, in their own right, are of significant local interest. (To join, please contact Cllr. Jill Harvey).

Transport and Housing – January '09

First glance – not an obvious pairing. On closer inspection, one is reliant on the other, or so you might think.

Many parish residents have felt we have been poorly served by the public transport system, so we were delighted that a broad and particularly relevant panel had accepted our invitation to confront the issues. And our residents, come to that!

Staged at the Blackwell Social Club, Keith Parry, Rural Housing Enabler, Community First, started the housing section by discussing the purpose and benefits of commissioning a housing survey. Jane Burton, Housing Performance Monitoring & Enabling Officer, offered local examples and how BDC would work with partners if a survey determine a need. District Councillor Ann Doyle talked on the Longbridge development and Dr. Peter King, Bromsgrove Chairman of CPRE, underlined how effective the groups activities are, both nationally and nearer to home.

Speaking on bus transport, Mike Knott and Annette More, from Planning & Review, talked on the strategy being implemented and how this may help Lickey & Blackwell. Several questions and suggestions were forthcoming from a passionate audience. David Balme, Rail Transport Planning Officer, WCC showed a short film on rail travel and gave updates on: Blackwell "No way", Bromsgrove station "Completion by Dec 2010" and Longbridge station "loads of parking". Finally, we were heartened to hear of the wonderful work by Sally Ward and her team of 27 volunteers at Bromsgrove 'Rural Rides'. (Joint *PC Highways Group* and *Social Services Group*).

Keith Woolford



publicity



The Parish Council is fortunate to have a wealth of talent in many different areas that allows us to keep in touch with new innovations, and be responsive to the ever-changing technology that exists today.

Our website has been well-established and well-used throughout the last 12 months, but nevertheless we do not intend resting on our laurels and will update during summer 2009.

There has also been the addition of a 'blog', where Parish Councillors can quickly and effectively update time-sensitive information that can be disseminated quickly. It also gives the people of Lickey and Blackwell the opportunity to comment on events and give feedback.

The Parish Council has also developed excellent links with the local press; they often attend meetings, and are always receptive to the publishing – both on-line and in print – of our press releases and news. These relationships are very much to be nurtured.

Finally, there has been a complete overhaul of the Parish Council Newsletter, which has been very well received. We see this as the main vehicle to make those we work for aware of what we have achieved, recent developments, community events that are PC driven, and any other such initiatives and updates. We are able to produce a professional, interesting and informative publication that all members of PC contribute to, which is sent to all householders within the parish.

We feel that the newsletter ensures that all our residents see and hear how the parish precept is being used on their behalf. As always, we value your feedback.

It is fair to say we have come a long way in the last 12 months. We will continue to harness the many skills available to us within your Parish Council so that we are transparent and seen to be effective.

Jackie Johnson



lengthsman



You have probably seen me about the Parish over the past few months, clearing blocked drains, cleaning road signs, cutting up fallen tree boughs and the many other things I fit into the four hours each week allocated to the area.

In the icy weather, someone had the misfortune to skid into the black and gold cast iron fingerpost on the green island at the Twatling Road and Mearse Lane junction with Lickey Square. Did anyone see this happen? Or does anyone know the whereabouts of the sign now? It is missing. If you can help, please contact the Executive Officer.

During the many past wet and snowy days, some of the grass verges in the Parish have been driven over by vehicles, causing damage that will take some time to heal. Could you please keep your cars away from these areas and ask your tradesmen not to park their heavier vans and trucks there – thank you.

*Best wishes,
Ron Rand*

tree warden



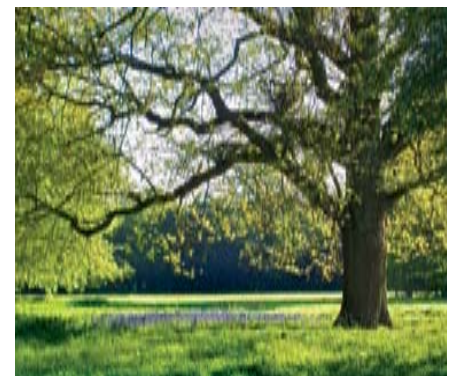
No new trees were planted during this time but a larch has been donated by a resident and will be planted in Blackwell.

I continue to check planning applications for potential tree/hedge problems, using the Village Design Statement as a guide and liaise with the Parish Council's Environment Committee as well as Tree Officers in BDC over any issues raised.

I have responded to residents tree queries – usually because they are under threat.

I have finished updating the first of my three Tree Leaflets (Linthurst Newtown), which I hope will be on the Parish Council website soon. The others will follow in due course.

Coral Beavis



social services



The Social Services Group takes an interest in a range of matters affecting the welfare of residents in the Parish. This includes recreational facilities, public transport, housing and local services.

Recreation

A year after completion the play area for under 10's in St Catherine's Road, which was opened in February 2008, continues to be well used. A dropped kerb has improved access to the play area and the re-siting of a telegraph pole has improved visibility for users and for drivers.

The group has turned its attention to other residents. A directory of youth groups and sports clubs in the area is being compiled and the next Residents' Meeting, in May, will address leisure and health and is aimed at all age groups in the Parish.

Public Transport

Residents remain discontented with the public transport in both Lickey and Blackwell. At the latest Residents' Meeting we had the opportunity to discuss both rail and bus travel with representatives from the District and County Council. We hope that public transport and links to the Cross City line will improve as the development at Longbridge progresses.



Housing

The Parish Council is awaiting a response from Community First regarding a housing needs survey. This follows a residents' meeting, where a rural housing enabler spoke about the process of establishing what kind of housing need a parish might have. The results of the survey would inform both Bromsgrove District and the Parish Council of further action, which should be taken.

Local Services

Last year saw the closure of the Post Office in Blackwell. Fortunately the shop remains open and an ATM is available. The Parish Council understands that the Post Office in Lickey is not under threat but we will continue to monitor the situation and keep residents informed.

Kathryn Crockett



footpaths warden



A programme of organised walks will continue thru' the coming year – watch out for news in the PC newsletter, noticeboards and Website.

During 2008, the footpath from Greenhill to Spirehouse Lane was named 'Rainbow Way' after the local farming family ~ see P6, and plans for 2009 see the footpath from Monument Lane to Beacon Lane be named 'Brown's Way' in honour of the last Chairman, Ron Brown.

Other paths have been kept in good order and some new kissing gates have appeared. Please let the Executive Officer know if there are any problems on the Public Footpaths in the Parish.

David Crockett

ABOVE:

SPOZ AND MICHAEL ANDREWS WITH NORMA AND WALTER RAINBOW
LEFT: **JANICE BOSWELL, CHAIR/BDC AT THE BLACKWELL PLAY AREA**



Information on parish activities can be found on the website and whilst every effort is made to ensure accuracy, the Parish Council and its councillors disclaim all liability or damages arising from information supplied.
please recycle or pass it on.

